RASH VOWS,

OR,

THE EFFECTS OF ENTHUSIASM.

956

A NOVEL.

Tranſlated from the FRENCH of

MADAME DE GENLIS,

AUTHOR OF THE THEATRE OF EDUCATION,
ADELAIDE AND THEODORE, &c. &c.

Eh! le vœu le plus libre et le plus volontaire,
Au Dieu qui prévoit tout, peut ſembler téméraire!

LA HARPE.

La modération eſt le tréſor du ſage. VOLTAIRE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

RASH VOWS.

956

WHILE the two friends were continuing their converſation, a meſſage arrived from lady Clarendon, that ſhe would take a ride in the country at five o'clock, when ſhe would be happy in their company. This invitation was eagerly accepted, and at half paſt four Sainville and the baron ſet off in their chaiſe, and took up lady Clarendon, who was already waiting their arrival. She ſeated herſelf between them, and Sainville taking Georgina on his knee, the carriage drove off. At firſt the converſation turned on indifferent topics, and lady Clarendon appeared dejected

and abſent. She turned almoſt conſtantly towards the baron, and from time to time, her reſponſive boſom gave back, without intending it, the ſighs which ſhe feigned not to hear. The baron racked his invention to keep up the converſation, but could only utter a few unconnected ſentences, to which Conſtance replied by a forced ſmile, or a miſplaced monoſyllable, that proved her total inattention to what was ſaid. As to Sainville, he was agitated with various emotions, that deprived him of the power of ſpeech. His joy at being with the object of his paſſion, whom he had but the preceding evening believed himſelf on the point of quitting for ever, cauſed a palpitation that continually increaſed, while innumerable ideas of joy and grief, contending for predominance, made him fear to truſt his tongue, leſt he ſhould betray the paſſion he had promiſed to bury in oblivion; and therefore to keep his word, he condemned himſelf to perfect ſilence.

In

In this he perſevered for about half an hour, when Georgina pulled Conſtance by the arm, and ſaid, " Look this way, mamma; ſee how grave my godfather is: 'Tis becauſe you turn your back to us; I am ſure it is." Conſtance dared not chide her, however angry at this ſpeech, and to change the converſation, ſaid ſhe would walk a little way on foot. Having ſtopped the chaiſe, Sainville got out firſt, and offered lady Clarendon a trembling hand, which ſhe bluſhed as ſhe accepted, and then leaning on his arm, looked at him with an air of timidity and ſoftneſs, of which the expreſſive ſenſibility penetrated his heart. He now felt ſo charmed, ſo tranſported with joy, that he thought himſelf the happieſt of men: for the ſtronger the paſſion of a lover, the more eaſily he endures the privation of that happineſs to which he aſpires. A mere trifle gives him the moſt exquiſite delight, and he prizes ſo highly the moſt inſignificant favour, that a

word or a look, which cannot even flatter his hopes, compenſates for an age of wretchedneſs and miſery.

The baron coming up to lady Clarendon, ſaid: "Your ladyſhip has not choſen the moſt pleaſant ſpot for a walk. This barren deſert forms but a cheerleſs landſcape; this rugged plain, covered with whins and brambles, chills the fancy, and paralyſes the imagination."—"I agree with you," ſaid ſhe, "but why is this immenſe tract of country thus abandoned? Is it incapable of cultivation?"—"That we will preſently learn," ſaid he, and addreſſing himſelf to the driver, who was coming ſlowly on with the carriage, "Flamand," ſaid he, "this muſt ſurely be very bad land, ſince no one thinks it worth tillage."—"Excuſe me, ſir," replied he, "in the late marquis's time it was covered with vineyards, and corn fields, and cottages; but now the country is ſo miſerable"—"And what," interrupted the baron, "is become

become of the inhabitants?"—"Bad years," replied the driver, "with the death of the marquis, and new farmers of the revenue, have ruined them; and they have abandoned their lands to perſons ſomewhat leſs poor than themſelves, but not rich enough to make them anſwer. Theſe have gone away, and left the land almoſt grown over with weeds and brambles, and ſo at length it has become as you now ſee it."—"In this province," ſaid lady Clarendon, "one cannot walk a dozen ſteps, without meeting many houſeleſs wretches, while this extenſive territory, which might ſupport a vaſt number of poor families, remains uncultivated—Pray," added ſhe, looking at Sainville, "this land cannot ſurely belong to you?" —"It is indeed mine," replied Sainville, "but I was entirely ignorant of theſe particulars."—"For God's ſake, let us never come here again," ſaid lady Clarendon. "It makes me ſhudder to reflect, that this

desert was once a fertile and happy scene of population——and it grieves me still more to hear that it is your property." Sainville blushed, but made no reply, and became lost in thought. Lady Clarendon however asked him how old he was at the death of his father."—"I was then," said he, "but twelve years old, and, unfortunately, I was too young to benefit by his good example. But there *are* advisers whose counsels are equally instructive with those of a virtuous parent, and they who know how to value them ought to obey their dictates." Constance was so affected with these words, that she gently pressed her arm against that of Sainville, then instantly recollecting herself, she repented this involuntary impulse, while Sainville's delicacy, convinced it was not intended, dared not risk a correspondent movement. He even avoided meeting the eyes of lady Clarendon, imagining her to feel embarrassed at the circumstance, and therefore

abruptly

abruptly changed the converſation. This reſerve made a lively impreſſion on her mind, and the moſt vehement tranſport would perhaps have been leſs dangerous to her peace.

As night began to approach they all re-entered the carriage, and the two friends after ſetting down lady Clarendon returned to the caſtle. As ſoon as they were alone, Sainville ſaid to the baron, "You muſt acknowledge, my dear Verceil, that Conſtance is really an incomparable woman. Yet her beauty, her wit, her talents, her eaſy and engaging manners, and her perſonal charms, are not the ties that moſt ſtrongly bind me to her. Were ſhe only the moſt beautiful and moſt amiable woman in the world, I might hope to overcome my paſſion; but how is it poſſible to tear from the bottom of my ſoul the indelible ſentiments her virtues have planted there? How can I ever abandon the ardent deſire, the ineſtimable happineſs of

possessing a heart so pure, so affectionate, and so beneficent? We must imitate, we must even resemble her if it is possible, before we can aspire to her friendship."—"My dear Sainville," interrupted the baron, smiling, "I foresee with pleasure that soon this neighbourhood will no more be importuned with beggars; we shall hear no more of the *late marquis* on every occasion."—"Yes," replied Sainville, "I will seize the happy opportunity to convince Constance of the absolute power she has over my whole soul—not by the frivolous minuteness of attentions to which she is superior, but by imitating the virtues she practices, and which she makes me love and adore. Yes, I participate in all her feelings, and she alone can influence my heart or my actions. Confined to my own ideas, I was unprofitable and inert, but with her I become what she is herself. When I behold her melt with pity for the unfortunate, my heart expands with the

tendereſt emotions, and I become compaſſionate and humane. I even fancy myſelf poſſeſſed of an equal ſhare of ſenſibility. In ſhort, ſome ſecret charm inſtantly communicates every impreſſion ſhe receives, and therefore when I am with her, I might almoſt fancy myſelf the beſt as well as the happieſt of men."

Thus did Sainville wholly abandon himſelf to his enthuſiaſtic paſſion; a paſſion of which the exceſs ſometimes meliorates, and ſometimes miſleads the heart it inflames. This ardent, this irreſiſtible paſſion carries every thing before it, and renders us virtuous, or hurries us into crimes as fortune and circumſtance direct. 'Tis true, actions of immortal glory have been performed by its impulſe, but it has alſo given birth to the blackeſt crimes. It has formed heroes and poltroons; and the ſame heart which it ſwells to glory, might, with a different train of ſubordinate events, with a leſs fortunate concurrence of cir-

cumſtances, have ſacrificed honor and virtue at its ſhrine. The unfortunate count of Elby, whoſe wretched life was a train of falſehood and treachery, would, doubtleſs, in the ſituation of Sainville, have been equally delicate and generous. Like him, he loved to exceſs; but unfortunately his paſſion forced him to renounce the dictates of virtue *, while the ſame paſſion permits, nay, commands Sainville to cheriſh her mandates and purſue her ſteps.

* Had Cleopatra loved glory, Marc-Anthony, who had a natural generoſity of heart and an intrepid courage, would have been the moſt celebrated hero of antiquity. He would have gained a victory at the battle of Actium over the timid Octavius, and given law to the whole world. Love, which was the cauſe of Marc-Anthony's ruin and diſhonour, re-animated the ſinking courage of one of the moſt virtuous among the kings of France, and reſtored him to the throne. Hence we deſpiſe the infatuated Roman, while we admire and extol Charles VII. Yet both were alike carried away by the ſame intoxication of paſſion which held them captive, and the difference between their deſtinies aroſe ſolely from that between the characters of Cleopatra and Agnes Sorel.

Equals

Equals in attachment, they would equally have obeyed whatever orders their miſtreſſes had enjoined. Such are the dangerous extravagances, ſuch the impetuous and fatal intoxication of love. Oh, blind and imperious paſſion! happy the man who is able to evade thy infuriate power! Alas! who knows to what unheard-of deeds thou mayeſt urge thy hapleſs votaries *?

The two friends were ſtill together when a ſervant brought them ſome letters from

* The trite maxim, ſo often repeated, 'that if we do but *make a good choice* we run no riſk,' is erroneous. We chooſe a friend, we love him, and we ſeek his ſociety. Not ſo with lovers. We do not make choice of them; on the contrary we rather promiſe ourſelves to avoid them. No modeſt woman ever chooſes a lover. Her heart is engaged by inſenſible degrees. A violent attachment to the moſt virtuous of mankind may produce the moſt baneful errors of conduct; and without the moſt fortunate concurrence of events, no one who is deeply in love, can be certain of adhering to the undeviating line of rectitude. In no ſituation can we then enſure happineſs. What numerous motives urge us to ſhun ſo dangerous, ſo fatal a paſſion!

Paris. One of thoſe to the baron was from Madame de Tervures.

'’Tis long,' ſaid ſhe, 'ſince you 'have mentioned your *heroine* to me, but 'I ſupped the other evening with the In- 'tendant of the province where you now 'are, and he has completely ſatisfied my 'curioſity. Having been ordered by go- 'vernment to make inquiries concerning 'this myſterious *incognita*, he has fully 'diſcovered what you are perhaps ſtill unac- 'quainted with; I mean all the adventures 'of this ſingular woman. In the firſt place, 'though ſhe ſays ſhe is only twenty-four or 'twenty-five years old, ſhe is in fact thirty- 'two; and though ſhe always wears a veil, 'yet ſhe can by no means apply to herſelf the 'inſcription of the celebrated ſtatue of 'Iſis, 'No mortal has ever raiſed the veil 'that covers me.' The Intendant aſſures 'me it has been raiſed by a gentleman in 'your neighbourhood, whoſe name I have 'forgot, and afterwards by your friend,

'which

'which occaſioned a duel ſome months ago, 'in which your friend was dangerouſly 'wounded. I am happy to hear he is now 'perfectly recovered. Thus you perceive 'I have good information. It is true, 'the news from Languedoc arrive rather 'late here, but every thing comes out at a 'certain period, notwithſtanding the ſilence 'of the moſt cautious *confidants*. This 'anecdote has made much noiſe here, and 'does not by any means excite a very 'lively intereſt in favour of your *heroine*. 'We tolerate inconſtancy becauſe it is 'pardonable to change for the better, but 'we do not love women who get their 'lovers into affrays. I dare ſay your ſur-'priſing foreigner has made the pretrieſt 'romance in the world of her hiſtory; 'but if you prefer the pure and ſimple 'truth to the charms of fiction, you muſt 'determine to ſhut your ears to every word 'ſhe may have told you. The real fact 'is this: that lady was divorced ſeven

'years

'years ago for adultery; but her paramour, 'in lieu of marrying her, has entirely 'abandoned both her, and the child ſhe 'had by him, who is now with her under 'the name of Miſs Georgina. Thus de-'ſerted and diſhonoured, ſhe gave herſelf 'up to intrigues and gaming, and at length 'a train of unfortunate events and odious 'adventures have obliged her to baniſh 'herſelf from her native country. I have 'learned theſe particulars from two Engliſh 'gentlemen, who know her *perfectly* well, 'and who cannot conceive how any one 'can make a fool of himſelf by fighting for 'ſuch a *heroine*. They add, that ſhe has 'once been pretty, and may again appear ſo 'by candle-light, with the aſſiſtance of an 'enamel ſhe lays on with great art, which, 'however, the open day-light would diſ-'cover. This is doubtleſs the motive of 'her always appearing veiled, in order at 'once to favour her artifice, and excite 'curioſity. My friendſhip for you, impoſes

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'on me the duty of thus correcting your 'romantic ideas, which, I muſt declare to 'you, have drawn a great deal of ridicule 'on yourſelf and your friend. I allow that 'mankind are conſtantly the dupes of 'illuſion, and every thing we ſee wears falſe 'colours; but if you return to this place, 'you will here find theſe illuſions much 'ſweeter; nor could it be neceſſary 'to have taken ſo long a journey for the 'pleaſure of being agreeably deceived. 'You aſk if I am happy: alas! how is 'it poſſible to be happy with an exquiſite 'ſenſibility which is increaſed by the en-'thuſiaſm of youth, and the fire of an 'unbounded imagination? My happineſs 'will ever depend on the affections of my 'heart; yet I cannot find a heart that 'harmonizes with my own, though I am 'conſtantly in purſuit of that treaſure. 'This ſeducing hope cauſes many miſtakes 'and errors, which give to diſappointed ſen-'timent the deceitful appearance of levity.

'Conſtancy

'Conſtancy is an eaſy virtue to cold unfeeling hearts and inferior underſtandings; 'for with them many objects are able to 'ſympathiſe. But how can a heart endowed 'with exquiſite delicacy become permanently attached or irrevocably fixed?— 'Adieu. I have much need of your advice, 'and ſtill more of your friendſhip.—A '*certain perſon* who has a right to be 'offended at ſo long an abſence, begins to 'be alarmed, and I to be afflicted 'at it. We often ſpeak of you and regret 'your abſence. Return I beſeech you; ''tis the command of love, and friendſhip 'conjures you to obey.'

The baron would willingly have concealed this letter from Sainville, had he not imprudently begun to read a few lines aloud; and therefore he was obliged to proceed. This madame de Tervures was an unprincipled coquette, who after having ſeduced, deceived, and quitted Sainville, had rejoiced in his departure for Languedoc,

guedoc, becaufe fhe confidered that journey as the effect of violent jealoufy. But Sainville, who was deeply enamoured with another object, foon tarnifhed all the luftre of her triumph. Rendered romantic by his paffion, he appeared quite a phenomenon to the world, and awakened in many a female bofom the flame of envy towards the woman who had given rife to fuch a prodigy. 'Twas this fecret flame that induced madame de Tervures to collect with fo much care all the abfurd fcandal fhe could learn regarding lady Clarendon.

Her letter excited in the breaft of Sainville the moft unbounded indignation. " What," faid he, " cannot the innocent and harmlefs Conftance enjoy her obfcurity in a remote cottage, without being attacked by the fhafts of calumny; and muft even her acts of beneficence become the means in the hands of flander to blacken her fpotlefs character? I can eafily

eaſily underſtand," ſaid he, "that a poor child ſhe has adopted, and who calls her mother, may be miſtaken for her own daughter; but can you imagine what this pretended duel can mean between a gentleman in this neighbourhood and myſelf?" —"Very eaſily," replied the baron, "'tis the adventure of the poachers that has given riſe to that falſe report. You were wounded, and Conſtance was the innocent cauſe of that event: and this ſtory, related ſeveral months afterwards, has been very naturally transformed into a duel."—"What an execrable world," ſaid Sainville. "'Tis enough that we know its true character, to be cured of our fooliſh deſire of pleaſing it. But, my dear Verceil," continued he, "I hope you will not liſten to the invitation of madame de Tervures."—"No," replied the baron, "I may perhaps in the courſe of the winter make a ſhort journey to Paris, to ſee madame de Flamigny; but I ſhall

ſpeedily

ſpeedily return and ſtay with you till your ſate is determined."—" Alas!" ſaid Sainville, " that may amount to a promiſe to paſs your life with me. I fear I abuſe your friendſhip when I wiſh to detain you here. Were your viſit to Paris paid to one more worthy your regard, I would not for a moment attempt to diſſuade you; but you have yourſelf communicated to me cauſes of diſguſt, which ought to have entirely diſconnected you from her."—" 'Tis true," ſaid the baron: " and in fact, I no longer feel any attachment; but it would be unjuſt to puniſh her now for offences which I have already forgiven when I loved her. Friendſhip ought to be far more candid than this violent paſſion, and I ſhould rejoice extremely at my indulgence as a lover, if I could convert a fickle miſtreſs into a ſincere and grateful friend." Sainville would have replied, that none but worthy and ſenſible women could become ſincere friends,

friends, had not the baron already given him too many proofs of his regard to allow him unneceſſarily to contradict him.

In the mean while Sainville, ſtrongly impreſſed with the laſt converſation of lady Clarendon on the ſubject of beneficence, reſolved to convince her how deeply the ſentiments ſhe uttered had ſunk into his heart. He therefore conceived a project which he communicated to the baron, and which he haſtened to put in effect with an aſtoniſhing eagerneſs and activity. He roſe every day before the ſun, and, wholly engroſſed by his ſcheme, he devoted all his time and attention to its execution with unremitting aſſiduity. He even paſſed whole days without ſeeing lady Clarendon; but he only deprived himſelf of that pleaſure, for the ſtill more delightful gratification of hearing his conduct applauded by her lovely lips. Thus did three weeks elapſe, when Sainville went

to

to receive the reward of his induſtry; while lady Clarendon, to whom the ſtricteſt ſecrecy had been obſerved, was ignorant of what love had prepared for her ſatisfaction.

Early one morning, more melancholy and thoughtful than uſual, ſhe was traverſing the graſs-plot of her garden with lingering ſtep, and endeavouring in vain to fix her attention from time to time on a book, from which her importunate thoughts engroſſed her mind and diſtracted her ideas. At length ſhe ſeated herſelf on a bench, and laying down the book, fell into a profound reverie, which had continued about half an hour when Thomſon announced the arrival of the two friends, who almoſt at the ſame moment came up to her. She roſe to meet them, and aſked what led them to pay her ſo early a viſit. "The fineneſs of the weather," ſaid Sainville, "induced us to hope you might accept a propoſal we have to make

for

for a ride in the country."—"But how fine you are!" ſaid ſhe, looking at Sainville, whoſe dreſs though ſimple, was more ſtudied and more elegant than uſual.—"I obſerve," ſaid the baron, "you take no notice of the new coat I have alſo put on to-day."—She bluſhed at the remark, and obſerving the dreſs of both, was ſtruck with the air of myſtery of the baron, and particularly with the joy that ſparkled in Sainville's countenance, to whoſe ſolicitations to join their party ſhe conſented. Georgina was immediately ſent for, and all four got into the carriage. When the driver aſked where he was to go, Sainville replied with a triumphant animation, "To the deſert."—"What, ſaid lady Clarendon, "do you—"—"You muſt aſk us no queſtions," interrupted Sainville; "for we muſt not anſwer them."—"A fine way," ſaid the baron, ſhrugging up his ſhoulders, "of keeping a ſecret! You promiſed to give your orders privately,

privately, and now you thunder them in our ears. Conſtance may now eaſily diſcover the whole."—"Indeed," ſaid ſhe, "I cannot gueſs what you mean; I ſee clearly you have ſome ſecret; but my ingenuity can go no further."—"My dear Verceil," ſaid Sainville, "do not be angry: remember I have kept ſilence for three whole weeks."—"Oh! I aſſure you," ſaid the baron, "'tis the ſame to me, 'tis entirely your own affair; and you are welcome to act as you pleaſe." He ſaid this in ſo ſharp a voice, that lady Clarendon looked at him with ſurpriſe and aſtoniſhment. He underſtood her, and therefore endeavoured to aſſume an air of good-humour; but his cheerfulneſs was forced and unnatural, becauſe he was really diſappointed and diſpleaſed. Hence he felt angry with himſelf; and this ſo increaſed his embarraſſment, that he did not recover his uſual gaiety all the reſt of the excurſion. The baron had a great deal

deal of good-nature and kindnefs, but was extremely irritable. He had planned a furprife for lady Clarendon, in which Sainville had promifed to concur, and which he had now fruftrated: and this put the baron out of temper. He was alfo perfonally difcontented with Conftance. Accuftomed to enjoy the moft intimate confidence of all Sainville's miftreffes, her referve appeared to him an injuftice and an affront; and therefore, not being treated by both parties as a confidant, he felt himfelf an inconvenient intruder, and this not only wounded his delicacy but his pride.

Sainville, who was entirely engroffed by his favourite object, and burned with impatience to arrive, hurried the driver, till at length they approached the fpot whence they already heard the found of the tamboureens and bagpipes. "Ha! ha!" faid lady Clarendon carelefsly, "here is a *fête!*"—"Yes," replied Sain-

ville, "and I dare aſſert it is a feſtival worthy of your ladyſhip." A ſingle word is ſufficient to communicate the feelings of ſenſibility and ſympathy, and enable thoſe who are ſuſceptible of them to gueſs every idea. Hence Sainville's anſwer ſufficiently informed lady Clarendon of the object of this *fête*; and ſhe was now ignorant of nothing but its ſubordinate details. Yet, notwithſtanding her penetration, ſhe was moſt agreeably ſurpriſed, and much delighted to perceive that the reality very far ſurpaſſed every thing her imagination had ſuggeſted. Sainville hurried out of the carriage, dragging lady Clarendon after him, led her through a ploughed field, and ſtopping at the end of a ſtreet of cottages, "This," ſaid he, "is entirely the work of Conſtance."—"What," ſaid ſhe, "are we then in the ſame ſpot we ſaw the other day ſo naked and ſo barren? Is this the deſert?"—for

at firſt ſhe was unable to recognize it, ſo entirely was it metamorphoſed.* All the ground, to the extent of more than one hundred acres, was completely cultivated, and a village, conſiſting of fourteen beautiful cottages, occupied its centre. At the door of each houſe was planted a large tree, to which was tied a cow—a ſpecies of riches highly important to their new inhabitants. The general effect of all theſe houſes ſo newly built and beautifully ſeparated by ſmall gardens, the young women decorated with ribands and flowers, the peaſants who filled the ſtreet, the ſound of ruſtic muſic, the ſhouts and cries of joy from all this croud

* A *fête* exactly ſuch as here deſcribed was given in the ſummer of 1775 to the Archducheſs Maria, by the Chancellor of Hungary. A German lady, in the winter of this preſent year, at the time when I was writing this work, related to me the particulars of that ingenious and affecting *fête*, equally honourable to him who conceived its plan, and to her whom he deemed worthy of its execution.

of people,—this concurrence and variety of intereſting objects formed the moſt pleaſing ſight that could have been contrived. Sainville, however, ſaw no other object than lady Clarendon, whoſe countenance he conſtantly watched, contemplating, with the greateſt delight, her ſurpriſe and emotions. He read, in her happy looks, ſome of the ſentiments that reigned in her heart, and her approbation almoſt intoxicated him with pleaſure. Conſtance felt affected to ſo uncommon a degree, that ſhe feared to truſt her feelings to language, leſt her firſt emotions ſhould lead her into too tender a confeſſion. She ſtudied her words not to pourtray her feelings, but to conceal them, and through fear of ſaying too much ſhe determined to be ſilent. The baron, notwithſtanding his ill-humour, felt the livelieſt emotions of pleaſure, and, without uttering a word, ſecretly wiped the tears, which, from time to time, in ſpite of his endeavours to ſup-

prefs them, trickled down his cheeks. At length lady Clarendon, turning to Sainville, " Three weeks ago," faid fhe, " I was determined never to come here again; but now I am fo delighted with the place, that I could pafs my life here. Where could I think of you with fo much pleafure?"—" Ah," replied Sainville, " in whatever place you may be, reft affured my attachment to you will render me capable of every virtue that will juftify the dear friendfhip you have promifed me. You are my guide, my model! You will communicate to me your excellences, and I fhall be indebted to you for every thing!—Yes, I adore that beneficence of which you have firft taught me the enjoyment!" Here he paufed, and a kind look from lady Clarendon was the only anfwer he received, or even wifhed. In order, however, to put a ftop to this converfation, fhe expreffed a great defire to go into one of the new houfes, on which Sainville

conducted

conducted her to the neareſt of them. A young woman, dreſſed in white, and leaning on a young man's arm, came and opened the door. "Theſe," ſaid Sainville, "are a new-married couple, who are now poſſeſſed of this little farm. Let us go and look at their whole eſtabliſhment. They now entered the cottage, which was filled with relations and friends invited to the wedding dinner. Their houſe conſiſted of a large room, a kitchen, and two ſmall rooms, neatly arranged, and furniſhed with every thing neceſſary for a family; even a preſs, full of clothes and linen. They then went into the garden, the poultry-yard, and a conſiderable incloſure intended for a cow and ſome ſheep. "Now," ſaid Sainville, addreſſing himſelf to lady Clarendon, "you have ſeen all; for the thirteen other cottages are built exactly on the ſame plan. Each inhabitant being equally provided for, no one can envy his neighbour's lot; and this impartiality will,

perhaps, be the fureft means of rendering their happinefs permanent."—"Are all the others then occupied by new-married couples?" faid lady Clarendon.—"Yes," replied Sainville, "and all nearly of the fame age. They were all married this morning, at the fame hour."—"And it chances," faid the baron, "that all thefe young women are pretty, though Sainville has only chofen them from the poorest peafantry. But Sainville is a lucky fellow in every thing."—"Ah!" faid lady Clarendon, "he deferves to be fo." —"Oh!" replied he, "if you think fo——"—At thefe words a lively fuffufion heightened her charms; and Sainville dared not to purfue the fubject any farther. After a paufe, he propofed to fhew her the place where the wedding dinner was to be given; towards which they immediately fet off. They had not advanced many fteps, when Georgina remarked that the gold chain which Conftance wore round

round her neck was broken. As ſhe made this remark the chain fell off, and drew after it a portrait of lord Clarendon, which, being always concealed beneath her dreſs, had never been ſeen by Sainville. He eagerly took it up, and could not avoid looking for ſome time at the portrait. Conſtance felt a diſagreeable ſenſation at perceiving it in his hands: ſhe felt as if this image of her dear lord, whom ſhe ſo highly reſpected, had been profaned. "Give it me," ſaid ſhe earneſtly,—"for God's ſake, give it me!" So ſaying, ſhe would have taken it from him, but Sainville continued to retain it, and fix his eyes ſtedfaſtly upon it. Tears even trickled down his cheeks, and fell upon the portrait, which he returned without uttering a ſingle word. The party now continued their walk in perfect ſilence; and, for ſome time, their object, and the whole *fête* were entirely forgotten. While they were walking ſlowly on, the brides and bridegrooms,

according to inſtructions given them, anticipated their arrival. At length the party came to a ſmall plot of ground, where lady Clarendon pauſed to contemplate the moſt charming ſight ſhe had yet beheld. Fourteen tables were placed in a line, at a ſmall diſtance from each other, and at each table one of the happy couples united by Sainville preſided. Theſe were diſtinguiſhed by the uniformity of their dreſs, having each a large noſegay, and all the gueſts were decorated with favors. An immenſe crowd of ſpectators, from all the neighbouring villages, danced to the ſound of flutes, bagpipes, tambourines, and clarinets, around the tables, and covered all the plain. As ſoon as they perceived Sainville, the dances ceaſed; the crowd gathered round him, and, at the ſame moment, his health re-echoed from every table, accompanied with ſhouts of tranſport, and a general applauſe from all the ſpectators, as well

as

as the new-married couples and their guests. Every one was melted with joy and satisfaction—every one repeated the name of Sainville; and gratitude and pleasure seemed almost to intoxicate every heart. What a delightful moment for the happy object of this universal transport! Lady Clarendon, who stood next to him, bathed in tears and trembling with emotion, could scarcely support herself, and in this lovely and interesting agitation appeared more charming and more beautiful than ever.

After enjoying, for some moments, these exquisite sensations, Sainville offered lady Clarendon his arm, which she would only accept by leaning, at the same time, on that of the baron on the other side.—Thus they advanced through the surrounding crowd. As they passed along, her own name was frequently united with that of her admirer, and many times she heard it remarked, "what a worthy, what a

charming pair! ſurely they are formed for each other!" While ſhe bluſhed at theſe remarks, Sainville liſtened to them with delight, and ſlackened his pace to catch the ſound; but ſhe gently haſtened him away, and, at length, having quitted the plain, they arrived at a kind of little rural temple, formed with the foliage of trees, and decorated with garlands and feſtoons of flowers, in which a dinner was already prepared. As ſoon as they were ſeated, lady Clarendon, addreſſing Sainville, "You muſt be very happy," ſaid ſhe, "if it is true that the greateſt of bleſſings is to be beloved. Surely you are this day very happy! Theſe heartfelt tranſports, this unmixed joy muſt convince you of the univerſal eſteem you have acquired." This laſt ſentence, however, gave too general a ſenſe to lady Clarendon's compliment, to be entirely ſatisfactory to Sainville. "Ah!" replied he, "to be eſteemed is indeed a pleaſure, but to be

be loved by thofe whom we love ourfelves is the only and the higheft degree of human happinefs."—"And are not thefe poor people dear to you?" replied fhe. "Surely 'tis impoffible to be their benefactors without loving them! 'Tis poffible, indeed, that at firft mere humanity may not be our only motive; but, whatever be the firft fpring of benevolent actions, when we have once known the objects on whom we confer them, and entered into their particular wants and fufferings—when we have once meliorated their condition, and enjoyed the fatisfaction, the gratitude, and the joy they exprefs, none but a heart of ftone can continue deftitute of a lively and intimate fympathy and intereft in their lot."—"Ah!" faid Sainville, "I fcarcely know my own heart! but, led by your counfels—your image is fo intimately connected with every thing I do, that it is impoffible for me to feparate it from my actions and purfuits. I fcarcely know what

I really am, and I ſeem only to act or think as you lead the way. For example," continued he, " I have not truſted to any one the office of ſeeking out the unfortunate objects I would relieve; I have attended to it myſelf—and yet I conſtantly ſaid, ' 'Tis thus, or thus Conſtance would act.' And it is, perhaps, this idea alone which determined me not even to do good careleſsly, or without deliberation. After this, when I ſaw unfortunate perſons overwhelmed with miſery, I felt my heart overflow with ſympathy and pity, and I ſaid to myſelf again,—' Were Conſtance here, what tears would be ſhed from her lovely eyes !' and then my own were ready to flow. In ſhort, in giving orders for this *fête* my predominant idea was that of pleaſing you; and this day I have participated every tender emotion you have felt yourſelf. Never did you ſo excluſively fill my heart, my mind, my very ſoul!" This ſimple unaffected picture touched

the heart of lady Clarendon. "Well," ſaid ſhe, "I judge of you better than you do yourſelf. Believe me, your heart is ſuſceptible of every virtuous and noble feeling; 'tis the aſſurance of that friendſhip which ſees clearly, and ſeeks not to flatter."—"'Tis certain," ſaid the baron, "Sainville ought for ever to remember this day. After his example, beneficence appears to me ſo ſweet in the performance, that ever ſince this morning I am burning with deſire to go and bury myſelf in an old caſtle of mine, in order to build houſes, and marry all the young people."—"I hope," replied Sainville ſmiling, "you will not ſet off to execute this project without letting me know a long time before; for precipitate departures afflict me extremely."—"Oh," ſaid the baron, "if ever I undertake a long journey, you ſhall be appriſed of it: for inſtance, ſhould I go into Ruſſia"——At theſe words Sainville was diſconcerted, and repented of

having

having given occasion to this piece of raillery. But the baron applauded himself for it so much, that he began to recover his good-humour, and having enjoyed the embarrassment of his friend, he voluntarily changed the conversation. Turning towards lady Clarendon, "Permit me," said he, "to recur to an idea of yours, which struck me a little while ago very forcibly. You assert, that we cannot do good without experiencing certain pleasures—and that even should motives of a different nature at first determine us to such actions, the first benefit we confer necessarily communicates a taste for them, and leads to a habit of benevolence. But is it not evident that a vast number of persons have never done a single good office, except from vanity and ostentation?"—"Agreed," said she, interrupting the baron, "but we may expect much good from characters who place their vanity in such laudable objects. Such a mode even of

of purſuing their particular advantage is eſtimable; it is ſuch, that a low mind will never elevate itſelf ſo high. I confeſs I have frequently ſeen men of little ſenſibility perform beneficent actions merely from a juſt view of their own intereſt. I knew a lady of this character in London, who devoted a great part of her fortune to the relief of the poor. But how did ſhe act? She relieved them without going herſelf to ſeek for objects, or even ſeeing or knowing any thing of the perſons ſhe aſſiſted. A certain elevation of ſoul and nobility of ſentiment, accompanied by a ſtrong underſtanding, had taught her that the diſtinctions of virtue ſurpaſs thoſe of rank, and that it is not riches that give conſideration to individuals, but the uſe to which they are applied; and thus, in order to obtain ſolid and permanent eſteem, ſhe became beneficent. She gave orders to her ſteward to do many virtuous actions in her name,

and

and all the trouble ſhe had, was merely to give the neceſſary ſums, while her heart was not in the leaſt intereſted in the performance. But then, had chance or curioſity once led her to viſit the unfortunate objects ſhe relieved—had ſhe once beheld the heart-rending ſcene of a mother in deſpair, ſurrounded by an infant family ſoliciting in vain for a ſlender meal—the miſery of this wretched mother or the cries of her ſtarving children once aſſailed her ears—had ſhe once reſtored this ſtarving family to life, and joy, and happineſs——can it be doubted that her heart would afterwards have been for ever open to the charms of compaſſion and ſympathy, and that ſhe would have forgotten the vanity, the empty applauſe of the world, had ſhe once become acquainted with ſuch pure, ſuch exquiſite enjoyments?"

While lady Clarendon was ſaying this, Sainville's ſervant informed him that an old

labourer

labourer wiſhed to ſpeak with his maſter. At firſt he ſeemed to feel this an interruption, but a look from Conſtance determined him to order the ſtranger immediately to be introduced. Roger preſently led him in by the hand, and pointed out his maſter to him. The old man then ſupporting himſelf with his ſtick, came and ſtood near the table, and looked ſtedfaſtly at Sainville, but continued ſilent. His venerable figure, his tranquil and ſerious appearance, equally impreſſed Conſtance and her two friends; and they were all expecting he would declare the object of his viſit, when the old man turned to Roger, and ſaid, " I am ſatisfied! now lead me out again!" Sainville, extremely ſurpriſed at this action, detained the old man by aſking him the object of this extraordinary viſit. " Do you want any thing?" ſaid he. " Can I render you any ſervice?"—" No," ſaid the old man; " I am in want of nothing."—" Who then

then are you?" ſaid Sainville.—"I am the father," replied he, "of William, one of your farmers."—"I know William very well," returned Sainville; "but I did not ſee you with him when I arrived to-day: your perſon is quite ſtrange to me."—"I live ten miles from hence," ſaid he; "and it is a great way for an old man like me. I am happy to have been able to ſee you, for I eſteem your family. Indeed, ſir, you are of an excellent ſtock.—Yes," continued he, "we love our maſters dearly when they deſerve it." At theſe words tears trickled down the old man's cheeks, and Sainville viewed him with a mixture of affection and ſurpriſe. He looked at lady Clarendon, who was examining the old man's figure with lips half-opened, and an air of tenderneſs and curioſity, endeavouring to diſcover his character, and what kind of man he was. She was deſirous to aſk a few queſtions in her turn, and began by

inquiring

inquiring whether it was the *fête* that brought him thither. " Since you wish to know," said he, " I confess I was told of this *fête*; and concluded we had a good landlord, who is kind and charitable, like his poor father, and therefore I was desirous to see him once before I die." At this confession lady Clarendon could no longer restrain her tears, and Sainville turned away his head to conceal his own. Lady Clarendon perceiving it, pulled his coat, saying, " Ah! why would you deprive the worthy old man of this proof of your gratitude and goodness of heart? Are you then ashamed of possessing the sensibility of virtue?" At these words he turned round with some confusion, and uncovered his face, which was bathed in tears. The old man raised his trembling hands to Heaven, and after bestowing a thousand blessings on Sainville, he leaned on Roger's arm, and went out. " This, my dear Sainville," said the baron, " is the

the moſt flattering applauſe you can ever receive."—"And yet," ſaid Conſtance, "he would have concealed the honeſt emotion it occaſioned! What a ſtrange inconceivable madneſs!" continued ſhe, "and yet how common among your ſex! He who would be miſerable to be thought deſtitute of ſenſibility, or would not be afraid to kneel and weep at the feet of his miſtreſs, would conceal the ſacred tears which humanity bids to flow, and bluſhes to be juſt and virtuous! But," ſaid ſhe, addreſſing herſelf to Sainville with a moſt lovely ſmile, "I perceive I am growing ſevere and ſententious, though I am naturally averſe to being either a critic or a declaimer.—Yet a great intereſt may change one's character for a moment." Theſe laſt words enchanted Sainville, and rendered the leſſon he had juſt received more ſtriking and more grateful.

What power, what dominion is ſo irreſiſtible as that of a woman to whom the heart

heart is truly engaged, if her lover has but an elevated mind? She commands without even a ſemblance of claiming obedience. Her ſimple wiſh wins us into compliance, and her advice is revered as a law. Happy the woman who, knowing her own power, takes advantage of the intoxication of love to form the heart of her admirer to virtue. She binds him to her by an indiſſoluble and ſacred chain, and may look forward without anxiety or fear to uninterrupted happineſs. Even ſhould the lover cool, ſhe will at leaſt ſecure a ſincere and grateful friend.

Though night approached, Sainville and Conſtance reflected not on the neceſſity of returning to the carriage. The baron took but little ſhare in the converſation; he ſeemed to be entirely forgotten for the laſt two hours, and he felt ſeverely this neglect. He yielded the firſt place in the company to Sainville with pleaſure, but he thought he had a right to be ſomething more than

a cypher,

a cypher, and he felt himſelf miſplaced and ridiculous as ſoon as he ceaſed to think himſelf a uſeful perſonage. His ill humour encreaſing every moment, he walked to and fro, looked every now and then at his watch, complained of the cold, and was quite impatient to return to the caſtle. At length perceiving that his different movements were totally unobſerved, he came up to Sainville, and ſaid, in a dry manner, "As you cannot want me, ſir, I am going to look for a horſe and ſet off home!"—"Oh!" ſaid lady Clarendon, "we will all ſet off together preſently; do but wait a little." With this ſhe roſe, and taking the baron's arm, went out of the arbour with him. The carriage was now ordered, while Sainville ſtaid to give ſome directions. During this interval, Conſtance, in lieu of converſing with the baron, talked with Roger, but merely to make further inquiries concerning the old man. She aſked his name, that of the

village where he lived, how many children he had, his age and character, and in ſhort ſhe entered into the moſt trifling particulars with the moſt lively intereſt. Roger informed her, that he was ſeventy-five years old; that his name was Anthony; that he was rich, had a very numerous family, and that he was univerſally eſteemed and reſpected. All theſe circumſtances increaſed the intereſt Conſtance took in the old man, and the pleaſure ſhe felt in talking of him and praiſing him. Sainville, however, had not an opportunity to enjoy this ſcene, while his friend was a witneſs to it againſt his inclination. The poor baron, ſtill under the influence of his ill-humour, liſtened to this converſation with extreme impatience. Hurt at not being able to extract a word from lady Clarendon, he thought Roger a troubleſome talkative fellow, and the praiſes beſtowed on Anthony, exaggerated and ridiculous. Had not lady Clarendon held him by the arm, he would have

have quitted her and rejoined Sainville; but being thus obliged to ſtay, he ſighed, repeated his complaints of the cold, and when Sainville returned, he found him buttoning his coat and exclaiming, "that the damp of the evening chilled him, and the dew was his mortal enemy." At length the carriage arriving, they all ſet off, Conſtance and the baron on the one ſide, while Sainville, ſitting on the other oppoſite to Conſtance, took Georgina on his knee, who leaned againſt his boſom, and ſoon fell aſleep. The baron was ſilent and diſpleaſed, wrapped himſelf up in his great coat, and alſo fell faſt aſleep, or at leaſt appeared ſo. The ſeaſon being far advanced, it became ſo dark in leſs than three quarters of an hour, that they could ſcarcely diſtinguiſh the road. Every novelty of ſituation becomes intereſting to lovers. Sainville was tranſported at being with lady Clarendon in this obſcurity. He felt more at eaſe, talked more, and with unuſual

usual warmth of expression. He seemed to be more alone with her than ever, and imagined he might therefore be more attentively heard; and this added new charms to the pleasure of talking to her and hearing her conversation. But the situation of lady Clarendon was very different. The darkness of the night made her feel uneasy and alarmed. She was not sorry the baron slept, though that circumstance added to her embarrassment, and she spoke in a low voice to avoid waking him. She perceived that Sainville's tone of voice was more animated and more expressive than ordinary, and feared that, notwithstanding his promise, he would again venture to speak of his passion. This she apprehended the more, because she felt that he could never have chosen an opportunity, to her more dangerous. The charming *fête* he had just given on her account, all the emotions she had there experienced, the certainty that she was

adored by an object the most amiable and the most worthy of her esteem, all these affecting ideas pressed upon her mind in the strongest and most impressive manner, while the cold counsels of reason were but evanescent and confused. She sought in vain to awaken them in her mind, but could only remember that she had made certain wise and prudent reflections, of which she could not recal the particulars, nor could she, while Sainville was conversing with her, bring back her attention to so dull, though so important a subject.

'Tis a most distressful situation, to perceive that we are wandering from the path of wisdom, without being able either to shun the danger that threatens us, or to avert our eyes from its contemplation: as in the midst of a rapid course we are unable to arrest our progress, even on the edge of a precipice, which we discover too late to avoid, and fall into the abyss after

having

having viewed its immeaſurable horrors. Such is the ſituation of a faſcinated lover; ſuch was that of lady Clarendon. Her embarraſſment was continually encreaſing: her feeble timid voice, her confuſed anſwers, every thing would have made this evident to any one but Sainville. In the mean while their diſtance from home diminiſhed, and they were now within a mile of lady Clarendon's abode. Sainville was uneaſy at their approaching ſeparation. "Soon," ſaid he, "I ſhall no longer have the felicity of being with you—a few moments more, and we ſhall part."—"It will not be for a very long period," ſaid ſhe, "and to-morrow——"—"Ah, to-morrow," interrupted he, "I ſhall be far from enjoying the ſame happineſs; my heart miſgives me at the approaching cloſe of a day to me ſo fortunate and ſo happy, and it ſeems as if every bleſſing would then vaniſh from my poſſeſſion. I am afraid to be again abandoned to my own reflections.

They will doubtlefs deftroy the fweet illufions which perhaps now miflead me. Yes, I confefs that I feel certain emotions arifing in my foul, of which I dare not examine the caufe. Ah, yes, I am too happy, too much elevated with joy, and doubtlefs 'tis a mere illufion that I embrace." He paufed, and lady Clarendon only anfwered with a figh. Sainville, who fat oppofite to her, advanced gently forwards and faid, in a trembling voice, "You are filent, and yet we are going prefently to part. Ah leave me not in this uncertain fituation, but if my hopes are delufive difpel them." Thefe laft words he pronounced with fo much timidity, and in fo low a voice, that lady Clarendon could fcarcely have heard them, had not fympathy of fentiment which prevents our lofing a fingle fyllable of a lover's voice, borne them to her heart.

Lady Clarendon, however, perfifted in her filence, nor did her lover dare to prefs for a reply. Yet hoping fhe would make

make some answer he was approaching somewhat closer; in doing which he put his hand on the door of the carriage, where it met that of lady Clarendon. He seized it, pressed it to his bosom, and bathed it with tears. "Ah," said lady Clarendon, "can I then never rely upon your engagements?" Sainville would have answered, but, unfortunately, at that very instant the baron moved, and began to cough and show that he was perfectly awake. Lady Clarendon gently withdrew her hand, and Sainville, thus cruelly disappointed, threw himself back in the corner of the carriage, with so much vexation at the baron, that he could with difficulty conceal his feelings. The baron, feigning not to perceive how mal-a-propos he had waked, maliciously made the politest excuses for his sleep: but receiving no answer, he addressed himself to Sainville, saying, "I believe you are asleep also. Come, come, wake yourself; we are within ten minutes of our journey's

 end."

end." At theſe words Sainville felt his ill-humour redoubled; yet he continued perfectly ſilent. "Yes, indeed," ſaid the baron laughing, "he ſleeps like a top. Oh, nothing lulls to ſleep like the motion of a carriage at night; and then it is ſo dull to travel without ſeeing any thing." He made ſeveral reflections of this kind, when lady Clarendon deſirous of ſaying ſomething, aſked him what was the hour? Reſolved to make Sainville ſpeak, the baron replied, "that his watch had ſtopped," and puſhing his friend's arm, "Conſtance wiſhes to know," ſaid he, "what o'clock it is when we arrive. You have your watch, and therefore can inform us." Sainville made no other anſwer than taking out his watch, and making it ſtrike. The baron had no time to preſs him farther, for at that very moment the carriage ſtopped at lady Clarendon's door. Sainville placed Georgina, who was aſleep, in the arms of Conſtance, and he and the baron

got

got out. Thomſon came to the door with the maid ſervant, who took Georgina, and then lady Clarendon leaning on Thomſon's arm, begged Sainville would not follow her. This requeſt he received as a command, which he ſighed as he obeyed; and when ſhe had entered her cottage, he unwillingly re-entered the carriage, together with the baron. Being now alone, the latter felt no further inclination to rally or torment his friend, who felt this *tête-à-tête* as a reſtraint, and he even feared and avoided an explanation. Neither of them began any converſation, and they arrived at the caſtle with a reciprocal deſire to ſeparate. The baron complained of a ſpaſm, and went to bed; and Sainville, charmed at being alone, ſhut himſelf up in his chamber.

He paſſed the night in reiterating every thing lady Clarendon had ſaid, and deeply lamenting that he could no longer conti-

nue the converſation which the baron had interrupted. He remembered, however, with ſatisfaction, that he had been liſtened to without diſpleaſure. At ſome moments he even flattered himſelf his paſſion was returned, and that he ſhould one day overcome the ſcruples and reſolutions of lady Clarendon, while at others he diſtruſted his happineſs, and diſcovered innumerable reaſons that annihilated every hope. Lady Clarendon was herſelf equally uneaſy. She began to perceive that experience is of very little uſe, when it does not teach us to diſtruſt our own powers. It is eaſy to arreſt the progreſs of an infant paſſion, but we do not then think it neceſſary to employ a violent remedy to correct a trifling evil. We poſtpone our exertions, we deliberate, and every moment of delay renders the conteſt more painful, and victory more doubtful. In the meanwhile lady Clarendon had no ſooner riſen, than ſhe

received

received a letter from Sainville. She opened it with precipitation, and found the following words:

'I dare not present myself before you, 'for I fear to speak, and yet am unable to 'be silent. Ah! forgive a freedom which 'my heart cannot be denied. Surely you 'must have clearly read the sentiments of 'that heart, which burns to declare every 'sensation, every thought, every emotion 'it experiences. I delight in shewing my-'self to you exactly as I am, and if you 'imagined me to have even more intellect 'than I really possess, I should be the first 'to undeceive you: for to me it is a plea-'sure to unveil to you even my weaknesses. 'Learn then to what an excess love has 'bewildered me. I have already conjured 'you to dispel the delusive hopes that mis-'lead and inebriate my heart. Yet not-'withstanding all the wise counsels you have 'condescended to enforce, notwithstanding

'the severity of your own conduct, I dare 'still to indulge a ray of hope. When I 'listen to you, your arguments are con- 'vincing, and I believe what I hear, be- 'cause it is you who speak. But when I 'examine my own heart, I find it so full of 'passion, so faithful and so devoted, so ten- 'der and so uncontrollable, that I cannot 'but hope it may one day affect the only 'person in the world who is worthy to be- 'come its object. Thus it is that even 'love gives me some assurance. Its excess, 'in lieu of exciting my fears, sustains and 're-animates my hopes. Fool that I am! 'No; I have never really endeavoured to 'overcome it, and though I once pro- 'mised I would, I perceive that I only 'imposed on myself. You have seen me 'afflicted and dejected; but if I have some- 'times complained of my lot, believe me 'it was not the less dear to my heart, and 'that I only value the part of my life, 'since the period when I first beheld your

'charms.

'charms. Were I entirely deſtitute of 'hope, no human being would be ſo mi-'ſerable as myſelf. And yet I am not 'thus wretched. Ah! what do I ſay? 'While I am writing this letter, which 'will but diſcover to you the diſorder of 'my mind, I feel tears trickling down my 'cheeks—not thoſe, however, which ſor-'row bids to flow—Ah no! they ſpring 'from the moſt delicious ſentiments of the 'heart. But, oh heavens! if you do not 'love me, what will be my wretched lot, 'after thus abandoning myſelf to the 'ſweeteſt of illuſions? I can no longer 'ſupport this ſtate of uncertainty, which 'has already bewildered my reaſon.—Ah! 'ſave me from an affliction which will de-'ſtroy me. I am either the happieſt or 'the moſt wretched of mankind: but de-'clare to me my deſtiny, and pronounce 'for the laſt time—I will promiſe to believe 'you. You know my heart too well, not 'explicitly to declare your determination.

'You know it is impoffible I fhould ever 'love you more paffionately. Reflect on 'what you refolve to anfwer, and figure to 'yourfelf, if it is poffible, my feelings when 'I open a letter which will contain my future 'doom. The firft fentence, the firft word, 'will tell me all; the reft I fhall quickly 'conceive. Oh! what tranfports if—— 'Ah pity me and forgive my rafhnefs and 'prefumption—but no; 'tis impoffible to 'be either prefumptuous or rafh in loving 'as I do. Do not fuppofe I dare to hope 'from you a degree of paffion equal to 'that which rages in my breaft. To melt 'your refolution and touch your heart is 'my greateft hope. Oh! fay what were 'your thoughts yefterday, when you tore 'from me the portrait of lord Clarendon? 'I was examining with an emotion of 'refpect and admiration the features once 'fo dear to you. I cannot but revere the 'memory of the object you have once paf- 'fionately loved; but do not imagine I

'have the presumption to be jealous of 'him—no, I am only jealous of his unfortunate rival, of him who loved you 'alone, and who sacrificed himself for 'your sake. Yes, I am jealous of the idea 'he has left in your mind of the force of 'his attachment—how wretched shall I be, 'if you should believe any one ever loved 'like me! and if the generous heart of 'Constance does justice to mine, I have 'reason to indulge the most flattering 'hope. Surely you will not reject such 'feelings; you will not imagine friendship is the only return to which they are 'entitled: Do not repeat that your scruples 'are invincible. Are you not the sovereign disposer of my fate? Are you not 'even certain that I shall respect your superstitious fears, if you are unable to surmount them? If you do but love me; 'could I but once obtain that confession, 'what sacrifice would be too great for me? 'Elevated above myself, I would, without

'difficulty,

'difficulty, adopt your delicacy; I would 'think like yourſelf, and even your pre-'judices would become important virtues 'in my eyes. How eaſy would generoſity 'then become! I open my whole ſoul 'before you. Oh enlighten it, govern it, 'do any thing but abandon it. I am, per-'haps, deſtroying the good opinion you 'have formed of me. I know not why, but 'a ſad preſentiment ſuddenly alarms me. 'Ah! if friendſhip alone pleads in my fa-'vour, how weak and fooliſh you will 'think me. But no matter, I have neither 'the will nor the courage to diſguiſe my-'ſelf with you; even ſhould this blind 'confidence rob me of your eſteem; were 'I to loſe every thing I have gained in a 'ſingle moment——Great God! I will 'yet venture to aſk you to declare the 'truth. Perhaps it is a dreadful, an irrevoc-'able ſentence of condemnation that I im-'plore. Be it ſo; yet take pity on a wretch 'who has almoſt loſt his reaſon. Save

'him

'him from his despair; let your compassion 'console, or at least deceive him. Console 'me did I say? Ah, no; do not expect it, 'for your endeavours would be fruitless. 'If I must renounce you for ever, I should 'no longer feel an interest in life, or have 'any object to pursue, any wish to accom- 'plish, any design to fulfil. I should sink 'into a species of annihilation.—Alas! 'what do I say? I should in vain regret 'the happy apathy from which you have 'awakened me.—Ah! were it not better 'to be gradually extinguished without 'pain, than consumed by the most insup- 'portable torments? If you love me not, 'I shall reproach you, till my latest breath 'yields its last sigh, with the fatal proofs 'of your confidence and your illusory 'friendship. Ah! you should have 'shunned me; you should have hid your- 'self from me, or banished me your pre- 'sence. 'Tis now too late—death alone 'can separate me from you; still shall I

'follow

'follow you, even though deſtitute of 'hope. Ah! what ſhall I have to fear or 'to deſire when I ſhall be finally convinced 'of your indifference? You ſhall hear my 'complaints, you ſhall witneſs my deſpair. 'I ſhall loſe without recovery the feeble 'glimmering of reaſon that will be left me. 'Even your voice, the voice of Conſtance 'herſelf will be unable to reſtore it to this 'diſtracted heart.—Oh, Conſtance, ſole 'object of my love! dear, dear Con-'ſtance! ah tell me by what inexplicable 'charm even the pleaſure of pronouncing 'that loved name ſoothes and delights me. 'While I trace it with my pen, I feel the 'cruel agitation of my ſoul allayed. Ah! 'but pronouce the decree that diſpoſes of 'my fate, and I will for ever abjure my un-'reaſonable exceſſes; I will expiate them 'by an implicit and unlimited obedience— 'Speak! command! To live in the moſt 'abſolute dependance on your will, to act 'and think but as you ſhall ordain, is a

'ſpecies

'species of union of which not fate itself, 'or your most rigorous decision can de-'prive me. Can I wish to break such a 'happy bond. Subdued by a passion I 'can neither vanquish nor restrain, believe 'me, it is impossible for me to resist either 'your counsels or your will. 'Tis true 'I am no longer possessed of my calm 'reason, but you will be my guide and my 'refuge, and this entire submission will at 'least atone for the errors of misguided 'love.'

This letter caused a violent emotion in the heart of the feeling lady Clarendon. Convinced at last of the strength of her own passion, she was strongly impressed with the words, *You should have shunned me or banished me. 'Tis now too late.* "Yes," said she, with a sigh, "'Tis indeed too late, both for him and for me; —thank Heaven, 'tis I, am most to be pitied. He at least may love me without

a crime

a crime and without remorſe; but I cannot anſwer his paſſion without diſhonour. What a terrible, yet what a ſacred barrier have I placed between us! 'Tis the tomb of lord Clarendon that divides us. And ſhall I dare to profane thoſe venerable aſhes; ſhall I undergo the ignominy of publicly retracting a voluntary vow, traced by my own hand on a monument expoſed to the eye of the whole world, and which muſt outlive my memory? No, never!—Oh fatal enthuſiaſm, to which I owe my ruin! Ah! who ſhall dare thus to rely on her own heart for her future conduct? Is it not ſufficient to fulfil the duties impoſed on us by Providence, without the imprudent preſumption to forge imaginary obligations for ourſelves—duties which can only be fulfilled with anguiſh, or violated with ſhame. Even when I was thus bound by an inviolable vow, ah! had I but felt all the danger of my ſituation—'Tis true I had formed the reſolution never

never to receive Sainville, but from his first attempt to see me I ought to have quitted this place. Alas! Heaven itself has determined to bring us together. Had not the adventure of the forest made us acquainted, I should have remained concealed and undisturbed in my obscurity and retreat. Yet, after that event, I ought to have separated myself from him without delay, and without possibility of return. He might then have forgotten me; I could have lived without him; and we should both have been happy. But now I can only afflict him without being able to relieve him; I can but sacrifice my feelings without a hope of vanquishing my passion.

In the meanwhile an answer was expected, and must be sent. But as Sainville had himself apprised her of the importance of her reply, she determined maturely to reflect on the task she was to perform. At the moment when it is necessary to take a decisive step, we naturally become timid; especially

eſpecially when experience gives birth to much reflection. Sainville, notwithſtanding all the tenderneſs his letter produced, would no doubt have done better to ſpeak than write his ſentiments. With a little more art, and with leſs imprudence or enthuſiaſm, he would have eaſily diſcovered the ſecret his miſtreſs dared not to confeſs. Conſtance, however, returned to the letter, and again read with pleaſure the ſentence which proteſted, that a mere confeſſion of love would be ſufficient for the happineſs of Sainville. "He is ſo generous, ſo delicate," ſaid ſhe; "wherefore ſhould I doubt the truth of this promiſe—I never ſhall be his—he conſents to it himſelf. But ought I to deprive him of the only conſolation he can receive at my hands? Is it not enough to renounce the poſſeſſion of him? muſt I alſo deceive him, and reduce him to deſpair, when he engages to reſpect my ſcruples? Yet if my ſecret eſcapes me, can I ſtill be miſtreſs of my deſtiny? When he

he is certain that I love him, will he be the lefs dangerous to me, and will he keep his word? Has he not already promifed never to fpeak to me of his paffion?—Alas! what fteps fhall I take? What fhall I anfwer?"—Thefe reflections plunged her into a melancholy reverie, and after fome minutes fhe arofe fuddenly, faying, "Come let me take the falutary advice of a fecret friend."

Near her bed-chamber was a fmall room, of which fhe always kept the key. It was confecrated to prayer and meditation, and contained but a fingle chair, a fmall bureau, and fome fhelves filled with pious books. A large picture, covered with black crape, occupied the principal fide of the room. This myfterious picture was executed by a celebrated artift, and reprefented lord Clarendon's tomb. Her fatal vow was there diftinctly traced in large characters. Having received it the day before her departure from London,

don, ſhe had covered it the ſame day with a crape, which had never ſince been taken off. It was in this room that Conſtance came to ſeek a refuge againſt her own weakneſs. She approached the picture, and remained motionleſs before it: at length ſhe ſuddenly ſeized the veil, and tore it off with emotion, and thus uncovered the whole. At the ſight of this painting, which preſented to her eyes, for the firſt time after an interval of four years, the monument where the aſhes of her deceaſed lord were depoſited, ſhe fell upon her knees, and ſhed a torrent of tears.—At this moment the only ſorrow ſhe felt aroſe from the remembrance of lord Clarendon. Deeply affected with her thoughts, ſhe forgot her weakneſs, her remorſe, and even Sainville himſelf. A lively and ardent imagination thus ſtrongly impreſſed, reſtored for a moment all the energy of her former griefs, and her long-extinguiſhed paſſion.—Ah! who can explain

plain or underſtand the inconceivable verſatility of the human heart!—She who came to deplore with ſo much anguiſh an imprudent and raſh vow, now again exulted in having taken it; read it over with conſcious pride, and renewed it with enthuſiaſm! Though this illuſion could not long continue, yet it did not vaniſh without leaving in the mind of lady Clarendon a fixed and unchangeable determination to fulfil the duties ſhe had impoſed on herſelf to their utmoſt extent. She quitted the room with a reſolution to anſwer the unfortunate Sainville in a manner at once to put an end to every hope. Returning to her parlour and ſeating herſelf, ſhe took the pen, and ſighed as ſhe began to write; but ſoon her tears obliterated the falſehood which coſt her ſo much pains to delineate. Again ſhe collected all her reſolution, and began anew: but ſhe could not find the expreſſions ſhe ſought for; thoſe which occurred were too ſevere or too tender: ſhe

ſhe often ſtopped to reflect, leaned her head upon her hand, endeavoured to ſtudy, but could think of nothing but her paſſion.

Recovering from her diſtraction, and again recalling her courage, ſhe at length concluded her letter. When ſhe read it over ſhe could not but perceive, that notwithſtanding the reſtraint and obſcurity of the ſtyle, her paſſion was evident in almoſt every phraſe. Conſtance tore the letter, began ſeveral others, which met the ſame fate; and at length determined to write a note in lieu of ſending a full reply. She was right: a letter is too long when we wiſh to diſguiſe the heart: for what may be concealed in a few lines will betray itſelf in two or three pages. She wrote as follows:—

" Ceaſe to deceive yourſelf, and to
" give me pain, by indulging hopes which
" can never be realized. Rely on the
" ſincereſt the moſt tender friendſhip;

"but be assured, that independently of "the sacred engagement by which I am "bound, it would be impossible for me "to grant you more. My example "ought to have taught you that it is "possible to conquer love; and rest "assured, that it is the cultivation of your "mind alone that can justify the esteem "and confidence of which I have given "you so many proofs."

This note was no sooner sent than Constance thought the expressions it contained too abrupt. She figured to herself the condition of Sainville on reading it, and trembled at the first effects of his despair. She was even half-inclined to write him a second and more consolatory letter than the former, and accused herself of ingratitude and cruelty. But though extremely agitated, she felt a kind of inward satisfaction which soothed her uneasiness: for she had done an act by which she regained her own esteem.—To hearts,

endued with exquiſite ſenſibility, to love without hope, and to ſuffer the keeneſt anguiſh, is, alas! the ſame as to exiſt.—To thoſe who truly love, theſe torments are inſeparable from life itſelf; as fatigue and exhauſtion are the neceſſary conſequences of a long journey along the edges of precipices, and in intemperate climes. Remorſe alone is truly an inſupportable evil. 'Tis an evil of which we cannot ſhun the blow without complete humiliation and abaſement: 'tis the ſevereſt, the moſt irreparable of misfortunes; againſt which nothing but the laſt gradation of corruption can form a barrier.—Courage cannot avail againſt it; 'tis cowardice alone can ſupport it without ſinking—and the greater, the ſtronger the mind, the more is it debaſed.

After much reflection, Conſtance determined to ſend for the baron. Till then ſhe had treated him with but little attention or conſideration, and ſhe now began to

regret her having ſlighted him. Without analyſing her feelings, ſhe felt a ſecret conviction, that after having robbed Sainville of every hope ſhe could no longer poſſeſs the ſame influence or the ſame claims on the baron. Yet his friendſhip was now very deſirable, becauſe ſhe wiſhed that, as he was the confidant of his friend, he might calm his uneaſineſs without endeavouring to put an end to the connection.

The baron was extremely ſurpriſed at receiving a meſſage from Conſtance, and eagerly complied with the invitation. Her reception charmed him, and made him forget all his ſecret animoſities towards her: for ſhe treated him with the greateſt eſteem and the moſt flattering confidence. Yet, without truſting him with the ſecret of her heart, ſhe perſuaded him ſhe only felt for Sainville the ſincereſt gratitude and the moſt tender friendſhip. She communicated to him the letter ſhe

had received, and informed him in what manner ſhe had anſwered it; and ſhe concluded by requeſting him to employ all his care to reſtore Sainville to more rational ſentiments.—"Do not," ſaid ſhe, "conceal from him this interview; I am not deſirous to hide my fears of the effect, my anſwer to his letter might at firſt produce; or that I was deſirous to have ſome converſation with his confidential friend. Tell him that I remember with tenderneſs his former promiſes, and that I rely upon them ſtill.—But loſe no time; go and talk with him, and promiſe me to return to me again.—Come and ſee me whenever you have leiſure, for I have a thouſand things to ſay which I could not communicate in the preſence of your unfortunate friend, and which it will give me pleaſure to impart to you." Conſtance was deſirous of gaining the good-will of the baron, and ſhe took the true means to effect it. To give him a part to act was at once to attach him

him to her and to make him happy. During the baron's abſence Sainville was in deſpair, abandoning himſelf to the moſt violent exceſſes of immoderate grief. As ſoon as he had read the anſwer of lady Clarendon, his firſt emotion was to run to the door of the room, in order to go immediately to Conſtance; but ſuddenly recollecting himſelf—"What am I doing?" ſaid he. "Can I, in this ſtate of diſtraction, even appear in her preſence? What ſhall I ſay to her? She would perceive my deſpair!—Ah! ſhe loves me not; and therefore I could but excite her contempt or her terror!" At theſe words he turned back, and throwing himſelf into an arm-chair, he took up the letter, and read it once more. Then, unable to reſiſt the deſire of the communications of confidence, he went to the baron's apartment, where he learned with ſurpriſe that lady Clarendon had ſent for him. Not knowing what to imagine, and anxious for his re-

turn, he walked, with hafty ftep, to and fro in a long gallery, of which the windows commanded the avenue that led to the caftle. In little more than half an hour he perceived the baron, who immediately joined him, told him where he had been, and anfwered the numerous queftions he afked. After giving him the moft circumftantial account of his interview with lady Clarendon, "I confefs," faid he, "that till this converfation I thought it impoffible for you to doubt of your fuccefs; but I am now of opinion that nothing can furmount her ladyfhip's fcruples. I perceive that in her heart fhe had the moft tender regard for you, but I alfo perceive that her refolution is invincible."—"Oh, heaven!" interrupted Sainville, "is this then the reward of my unceafing attentions and my ardent love?—Cruel and pitilefs! fhe robs me of a hope which fhe too well knows is far dearer to me than life itfelf!—Yet who is it that has

awakened this hope in my breaſt? It was herſelf.—I was willing to have quitted her, and to have left the country ſhe inhabited, had ſhe not herſelf induced me to ſtay: and ſhe has ſince completely bewildered my reaſon by the fatal proofs of her dangerous friendſhip! She has but appeared to commiſerate me, to overwhelm me with ſtill heavier woes!—Yes, any one but myſelf would only view her conduct as the moſt refined coquetry and artifice."—"I am certain, however," replied the baron, "that you can never entertain ſo odious an opinion of her."—"Ah no," ſaid Sainville; "what would remain in my heart if I muſt at once renounce every tender feeling ſhe inſpires? I am indeed very wretched, but I ſhould be infinitely more ſo were I totally ſeparated from her. I ſhould then fall again into that apathy, that inertneſs from which love has awakened me; and my miſfortunes would be encreaſed by the bitter remembrance of that ſenſibility which, though it

it has not made me happy, has at leaſt enabled me to think myſelf ſo. Even you, however, thought ſhe loved me.—How deceitful then is her countenance! How often have her looks miſled me! How often have I ſeen her change colour and turn pale, and felt her hand tremble as I preſſed it!—Yet ſhe does not love me! Yes; I will break through this ſuperſtitious reſpect, this ſervile timidity.—I will reproach her with a blameable ſeduction of my heart. What crime like that of appearing to love, without a feeling of real attachment and affection!—Ah! yes ſhe did feel that tender emotion which has ſo often intoxicated my ſenſes with delight, and I can explain the myſtery.—My love for her but recalled the remembrance of a period when her own heart was endued with ſimilar ſenſibility, and revived the ideas that divide her from me for ever! This is all that my tender, my unbounded paſſion could effect. Ah! my friend, what

what will be my fate? What ſhall I do? Ah! give me your ſalutary counſels?"—"Stay where you are," ſaid the baron: "The miſchief is done, and it is too late to fly.—But do not deceive yourſelf by indulging empty hopes, and be well aſſured in your mind, that lady Clarendon will never be more than your friend.—In future think but of meriting her eſteem. She knows your unbounded paſſion for her; you muſt now exert yourſelf to prove that your fortitude is equal to hers."—"Muſt I then reſolve," ſaid Sainville, "to deceive her?—No, that I never can attempt!—Beſides, would ſhe not read what is ſo deeply engraven upon my heart, notwithſtanding all my attempts to hide it? For what purpoſe, then, this cruel, this painful diſſimulation?"—"Becauſe," ſaid the baron, "it is impoſſible in a moment to eradicate a paſſion like yours. The only means of overcoming it is to conceal it, and, without abandoning yourſelf to deſpair,

despair, to deny yourself the indulgence of ineffectual complaints."—"Am I then," said Sainville, "really reduced to this? Must I be contented with mere esteem?"—"Yes," replied the baron; "but be assured, that in her heart this esteem is a powerful sentiment, which may even stand in the place of love. Remember the dangerous influence of that lively admiration excited in her by the pretended virtues of lord Elby."—"True," replied Sainville; "she resembles, in this respect, all other women. Address and artifice will at last succeed, and conquer her.—But no, I will never deceive her, though she will never love me, and will perhaps contemn me!—What a difference the events of a single day have produced! Yesterday, I thought she loved me: she listened to me, and spoke to me with such an air of tenderness, that I almost ventured to speak to her of my passion without disguise.—Yet what a letter has she written!

written! What coldneſs! What cruelty! Hitherto ſhe pitied me, and tried to conſole me; but now ſhe abandons me to my miſery!"—"To me," ſaid the baron, "it appears that her conduct may eaſily be explained. Your behaviour and your love have touched her heart, which ſhe has proved by an unlimited confidence. She flattered herſelf the hiſtory of her misfortunes would take from you every hope; and afterwards, when your deſpair moved her compaſſion, ſhe wrote you that tender letter which has deceived us both. But now ſhe perceives that her attempt to ſoften your afflictions has rendered you infinitely more unhappy; and it is but to remedy this that ſhe employs a ſeverity, which, though ſhe conſiders it neceſſary, no doubt coſts many a ſigh to her feeling heart."

This apology for the conduct of lady Clarendon only encreaſed the affliction of Sainville, who would rather there had

been ſome inconſiſtency or caprice in her actions, that he might explain it to his own advantage; and therefore the ſimple and rational interpretation of the baron afflicted him extremely. The reſult, however, of this conſultation was, that Sainville ſhould write to lady Clarendon—that he would abſolutely renounce every hope; that he was at length convinced of the folly of his paſſion; and that if he could not conquer it, he would at leaſt have courage enough to condemn it to perpetual ſilence. Sainville immediately wrote this letter, almoſt entirely dictated by the baron, and it was diſpatched without delay.

Lady Clarendon expected this anſwer with extreme uneaſineſs; yet ſhe dreaded its arrival. She doubted not every line would breathe the moſt violent deſpair, but her certainty that it would overflow with paſſion and with promiſes of eternal conſtancy, afforded her ſome conſolation

What

What then was her ſurpriſe when, in lieu of a long letter, ſhe received a note whoſe form and ſize announced that it contained but a few lines. She opened and read it with extreme diſappointment and agitation. One of the moſt painful feelings of the heart is to find itſelf in contradiction to its own ſentiments and declarations, and to obtain that which reaſon alone has prompted us to aſk, while we would really rather deſire a refuſal; eſpecially when we diſguiſe this ſecret hope to ourſelves, and really endeavour to believe that we wiſh to ſucceed in the attempt. We then forfeit the privilege of complaint, and nothing is ſo oppreſſive as the grief we bluſh to acknowledge even to our own minds.—The tears which ſhame and ſelf-love reſtrain, fall back upon the heart, and fill it with bitterneſs and deſpair!

Pale and trembling with this ſudden change, lady Clarendon read the note a ſecond time. "This," ſaid ſhe, "is preciſely

cifely what I wifhed for. His vexation has conquered his paffion, or rather the privation of all hope has already weakened the love I thought fo violent.—Ah, yes! he will doubtlefs foon recover his tranquillity, fince he fo fpeedily forms that refolution! I perceive I did not know him before! Shall I then always judge of every one by my own heart?" In the mean while, towards evening Sainville came to pay her a vifit. His ftay was fhort, and they were both equally embarraffed and referved.—The converfation frequently ceafed, and they feparated not only with coolnefs, but without entering into any explanation.

Sainville returned to the caftle more difpleafed and dejected than he had ever felt before. "I perceive," faid he to his friend, "that I have loft the confidence of lady Clarendon, and I have but feeble hopes of ever regaining it. I feel fo unhappy that I really wifh I could be fepa-

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rated from her for a time."—"Well," ſaid the baron, "let us quit this place, and ſet off."—"But no," replied Sainville, "I cannot at this moment.—She would accuſe me of yielding to reſentment and ill-humour rather than to the dictates of reaſon. I muſt at leaſt have ſome excuſe."—"Well: you have a thouſand at hand: your affairs, your relations, your profeſſional duties, render it neceſſary for you to go to Paris."—"Ah, no! ſhe knows too well that I have but one affair of importance in the whole world." Here Sainville ceaſed either to ſpeak or to liſten to the baron, and abandoned himſelf for a time to the profoundeſt reverie. The baron, to whom converſation was abſolutely neceſſary, began to be tired of ſo ſilent a companion, when, on a ſudden, he heard the ſmacking of a whip in the court-yard, and the ſound of a horſe in full gallop. "Ha, ha!" ſaid he, "here is a viſitor, and no doubt from Paris."

Paris."—" That is impoffible," faid Sainville: " I wrote that I was here merely to arrange fome affairs, and that I would not receive any one."—" However," faid the baron, " there is a courier arrived I am certain: let us fee what it is." As he was advancing to the door Roger came up all aghaft, and told Sainville that a man on horfeback had juft arrived from Paris with a letter of importance, which he was to deliver to him. Sainville ordered him to be fhewn up, and Roger went down again. " We muft expect fome bad news, I am afraid," faid the baron: " it is a long time fince you have had any letters from your uncle, and perhaps——" He was interrupted by Roger, who returned introducing the courier, who came up to Sainville, and delivered him a letter. " Very well," faid Sainville, " you may go." He then opened the letter, and having read it to himfelf—" Your prefentiment," faid he

to the baron, "was but too juſt: my uncle is dead; and they write me, that before his death he obtained for me the governorſhip of ***, which he held."—"This," ſaid the baron, "is the firſt inſtance of kindneſs he has given you theſe ten years. It is ſome reparation, however, for his behaviour to you during his life."—"They add," ſaid Sainville, "that I muſt return without delay to the court, as the miniſter has ſomething of importance to communicate to me."—"You were wiſhing for an excuſe," ſaid the baron, "and this is far better than any excuſe; for it is impoſſible to avoid complying with the requeſt." This obſervation increaſed the ſecret uneaſineſs of Sainville, who got up and took ſeveral turns acroſs the room, and then came up to the baron, ſaying, "I will ſet off, and for a very long abſence, that will convince thoſe who doubt it that I really wiſh to be away. I am, however, very much diſguſted

difgufted with the oriental defpotifm with which I am ordered fo imperioufly to Paris. Courtiers are a mere race of flaves. Were I even fupremely happy in this place, ftill I muft obey the *orders of the court*. I will fhake off the yoke of this debafing fervitude. I will indeed obey: I will fly to Verfailles—but it fhall be to refufe favours, which in reality are but an intolerable flavery."—" What?" faid the baron, " and will you really refufe the governorfhip?"—" Yes," replied he; " and I will alfo give notice of my intention to quit the fervice. I will even refign my *brevet* of half-pay, and then I fhall be free. Yes, I will renounce every thing, and if I could be forgotten by the whole world, my only remaining wifh would be accomplifhed!" This converfation convinced the baron of what was paffing in the heart of his friend, and therefore he would not irritate his feelings by mifplaced arguments. When paffion predominates, friendfhip can but

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commiserate our weakness and our sufferings: she must reserve her counsels for calmer moments. The mind revolts at austerity—whereas kindness and indulgence pacify and console us. Thus to contradict one who is dangerously ill in the period of his delirium, is but to render him still more furious.—Reason can never be inhuman, though men often misapply that name when they would be unjust and cruel with impunity. The truly wise man is the man of feeling.—He alone has the happy privilege of assuaging the afflictions of despair; he alone can convert the rigorous laws of wisdom into the salutary counsels of friendship.

Sainville having written to lady Clarendon to grant him a short interview, soon received her permission, and waited on her immediately. It was then eight o'clock in the evening, and she was seated on a sofa reading. At the other end of the room Georgina was quietly amusing herself

ſelf at a round table with her play-things., which, on perceiving her godfather, ſhe quitted, and running up to him, kiſſed him, and preſently returned to her amuſements. Sainville then approached Conſtance, and, with great emotion, preſented her the letter he had juſt received.——“ Well,” ſaid ſhe, after reading it, “ then you are going to leave us?”—“ Yes, madam.”—“ You will at leaſt paſs the winter at Paris?”—“ Perhaps ſo: for as I am going to undertake a very long journey, I muſt firſt arrange all my affairs.”—“ Your abſence will be for ſome years then?”—“ That is not my intention: I imagine I ſhall return in eighteen months.”—“ A year and a half!—That is as I ſaid—two or three years.”—“ Is that then, madam, the period you would preſcribe?”—“ I *preſcribe!* when I am not even conſulted.”—“ I have ſo often received that advice already, that at length I obey.”—“ What! have I ever adviſed an

an abſence of three years?"—"I ſhould not dare to aſk you to fix the period."—"I would by no means interfere in your plans.—Do you ſet off this eveniug?"—"But——" Here Sainville pauſed; for he heard behind him the ſighs and ſobs of Georgina, whoſe face was bathed in tears; and being aſked what afflicted her, ſhe replied, "The loſs of her godfather." Sainville, who was ſtrongly affected, called her to him, and ſhe threw herſelf on his neck. "My dear, dear child," ſaid he, "by you at leaſt I ſhall be lamented!"—"And by mamma too," ſaid Georgina. At theſe words Sainville looked at lady Clarendon, and perceived her eyes filled with tears, as were his own—when the door opened, and Georgina was called to go to bed. As ſoon as ſhe was gone, Sainville, who had got up and ſtood in one of the windows, came up to Conſtance, and ſaid to her with heſitation, "Ah! if it were poſſible my ſudden departure would coſt you

you a ſingle moment of regret!"—Lady Clarendon made no other reply than repeating only "*Eighteen months!*" and theſe words ſhe pronounced with ſo much expreſſion at once of reproach and ſenſibility, that Sainville forgot all his reſolutions. "No," ſaid he, "you cannot believe it. How could I paſs a whole year without ſeeing you!—I am about to ſet off, it is true, becauſe I am obliged to go; but I am going to Paris merely to refuſe a favour which I have neither ſolicited or deſired, and to give in my reſignation of all my offices."—"What do you ſay?" replied Conſtance; "will you then quit the ſervice?"—"Yes, we are now at peace; and if war ſhould take place I will ſerve as a volunteer, and—" This ſtrange reſolution Conſtance interrupted him to combat with all her powers. The conteſt was long and animated, and Sainville at length yielded. He promiſed to keep his commiſſion, but perſiſted in

in his determination not to accept the governorſhip. "What an influence your wiſhes have upon me!" ſaid he. "I had juſt decided to ſhake off for ever the fetters that deprive me of my liberty—thoſe inſupportable fetters which forbid me to devote myſelf entirely to your ladyſhip. But when I am in your preſence I have neither a will nor a character of my own! Fooliſh, weak, and contemptible! I expect nothing from you—yet without an object, and without a hope, I yield, in ſpite of my own judgment, to the irreſiſtible charm of obeying you.—What ſacrifice would not be compenſated by the thought that *ſhe has deſired it!*" At theſe words lady Clarendon, with an air of ſweetneſs and of gratitude, gave Sainville her hand. This favour, which would have tranſported him the day before, now affected him with far more tranquil ſenſations; for he attributed it to friendſhip alone, and therefore received it rather

with respect than emotion. "Well," said he, looking at her with a melancholy air, "when shall I set off?"--"I think," said she, "you cannot properly defer it long."—What? as soon as I go from hence?"—"No; to-morrow at noon."—"To morrow! Oh, heaven!—well, then, I will set off to-morrow."—As he pronounced these words, Sainville parted with the hand of Constance, which he had till then pressed in his own, and throwing himself back in his chair, he was silent for some moments. In fact, he wished to have postponed his journey two days later, and yet was desirous to conceal this new cause of vexation and disappointment. But it was easy to perceive his secret displeasure through the composure of his manner; and notwithstanding the tranquillity and coldness he affected, lady Clarendon read his feelings, and felt an equal pain. After a short silence, desiring to renew the conversation, "I doubt not," said

ſaid ſhe, "Monſieur de Verceil will not be ſorry to retuın to Paris."—"I dare ſay," ſaid Sainville with a forced ſmile, "I ſhall very much ſurpriſe him when I tell him we are to ſet off to-morrow. He has certainly no expectation of this ſudden departure. He thought that at ſo great a diſtance from Paris we might, without inconvenience, defer our journey two or three days. But I will ſet off to-morrow—or even this very night if you think it will be better."—"Had I thought ſo," replied ſhe, "I would have told you ſo."—"Well, on ſecond thoughts," ſaid Sainville, "I will ſet off immediately on going from hence."—"If ſo, you will have ten leagues of croſs-road to go in the night."—"Well then, I will wait for ſun-riſe."—"Ah, that is a different affair," ſaid ſhe. "This then, madam, will be my laſt viſit, and I ſhall not have the honour of ſeeing you again."—"It is certain that if you ſet off immedi-

ately from hence——"—" But you have juſt adviſed me to do ſo."—" I adviſed you!"—" When I talked of going at ſun-riſe, did you not reply, 'That was a different affair?"—" Well?"—" Well, that was a vague aſſent to a vague propoſal, or rather a mere ſuppoſition." At this ſtrange accuſation lady Clarendon, though her eyes were full of tears, could not help ſmiling. " Indeed," ſaid ſhe, " you are very unjuſt. Ah! did your injuſtice afflict me alone I would not complain: but you torment yourſelf at the ſame time! and that I cannot forgive."

This explanation was followed by Sainville acknowledging and correcting his error. Conſtance gave him another day, and his departure was deferred till two mornings after. Sainville now ſtill further opened his heart, and confeſſed his fears that during his abſence, ſhe would think of quitting the place; but ſhe upbraided him for the folly of this ſuſpicion with

with ſo much ſweetneſs and tenderneſs, that he ceaſed to feel, on that account, the leaſt uneaſineſs.

Sainville and the baron paſſed the whole of the following day with lady Clarendon, who made the former promiſe to viſit all his friends, and enter into the amuſements of ſociety; and that he would not come back without finally ſettling all his affairs.

They took leave in a manner equally affecting on either ſide. The ſenſibility of lady Clarendon ſweetened the tender grief of Sainville, whoſe happineſs at ſeeing her emotions ſuſpended for a moment the acuteneſs of his ſufferings. Nor did he feel all his weakneſs till he was again alone with his friend. In lieu of going to bed, he paſſed the night in writing to lady Clarendon, and ſet off as ſoon as day appeared. An hour after his departure Roger went to lady Clarendon's, where he had his maſter's orders to ſtay till ſhe aroſe, and then to deliver the letter; but

he had no occaſion to wait, as ſhe was already riſen. She received the letter with a melancholy dejected air, and bathed it in tears as ſhe read it. She deſired to ſee Roger, of whom ſhe aſked a thouſand queſtions, and then ſent him away to read it again.

A letter from thoſe we love, like a good novel, makes a ſtronger impreſſion in proportion to the frequency of the peruſal. Be its ſtyle what it may, if it is but ſufficiently long we diſcover at every peruſal new traits of ſenſibility and delicate refinement: and even were ſuch a letter perfectly inſipid, love will always, by ſome ingenious comment, give it every charm it wants.

The next day after Sainville's departure lady Clarendon, deſirous of diſſipating her melancholy, went to the new village where love had prepared for her ſo intereſting a *féte*. Thomſon therefore brought out an old Engliſh carriage, to which he

harneſſed

harnessed the team horses, and the bailiff of the farm undertook to drive. When Constance arrived at the village every thing affected her tenderly—every object seemed to speak of Sainville, and his name every moment echoed in her ears. Desirous to hear him praised and blessed by the villagers, and to contemplate his works, where she felt so much happiness, she entered the first house with an intention of successively visiting them all. She found the young bride spinning by her fire-side, and conversing with an old woman who was knitting. At the sight of lady Clarendon they arose, and with great respect came to receive her and gave her a seat. "I am come to see you, my good friends," said she. "And is not our worthy landlord coming too, madam?"—"No: he left this neighbourhood yesterday."—"Gone without you!" said they with surprise. Constance blushed, but made no reply. "Well," said the old

woman, "then he will ſoon come back."—"Is this your mother?" ſaid Conſtance (interrupting her, and addreſſing the bride).—"Yes, at your ſervice," ſaid the old woman: "ſhe and her younger ſiſter were my only children: my poor huſband left them infants in arms, and God knows the difficulties I have had with them. The marquis, when he married this girl, ſaid, 'Babet will take care of her good mother Pichon, and you, my good woman, will look a little to your daughter's houſehold affairs.' In marrying the young folks he has always remembered the old: you need but go to our neighbour Matthieu's, where good mother Bertrand lives, or to Fanchette's, where you will ſee her old father Jerome, or to——"—"And ſo every one has got the old folks with them?"—"Indeed it was much wanted: we were all very poor."—"Do you know how many inhabitants this little village contains?"—"I will reckon them up.—Or

do

do you reckon them, Babet. There are twenty-eight brides and bridegrooms, and then——"—" Forty-eight," interrupted Babet, " reckoning all the old folks."— " In all, then, there are forty-eight perſons whom Sainville has made happy?"— " Indeed it will be ſtill harder next year!"—" How ſo, good woman?"— " What will become of all the little bantlings?—It is to be hoped, pleaſe God, we ſhall have fourteen of them, or a dozen at leaſt. Well! our good landlord will be a father to them all; for without him——" —" Yes, no doubt your children will be his."—" What a family he will have then in ten years time! All the dear little creatures will pray to God to bleſs him, and that will bring him good-luck."— " Indeed, good woman, you have reaſon to love him."—" Ah! yes, madam, we love him dearly! Next to God Almighty, he is, as it were, our Saviour!—And then he

he is ſuch a fine, good-natured gentleman! —I think, madam, he is like you!"

Old mother Pichon was naturally talkative, and lady Clarendon was pleaſed to liſten to her and to aſk her queſtions.

How ſweet it is to hear praiſe beſtowed on thoſe we love, when we believe it to be ſincere, which we eaſily perſuade ourſelves it is! How every word ſeems to ſink into the heart! How we love thoſe who beſtow it, and what diſcernment we conceive them to poſſeſs! Lady Clarendon, who was ſeated between the two villagers, could not reſolve to quit the cottage; and notwithſtanding the delicacy and ſuperior cultivation of her mind, the babbling of this motherly old woman captivated her attention. Nor did ſhe leave her without promiſing to return, or afterwards fail to keep her word. She then went to the village where lived the grandmother of Georgina; and, in ſhort, ſhe ſought out every object that had any reference

rence to Sainville, for ſhe deſired no other ſource of pleaſure. No longer was ſhe that angelic benefactreſs who devoted every moment of her life to acts of liberality, and found in that ſublime employment pleaſures ſo pure and ſo ſweet! Now every thing that had no relation to Sainville became inſipid and troubleſome.—The unfortunate, however, were ſtill received at her houſe; but ſhe murmured in ſecret at the interruption of her delicious reveries, or of the letters ſhe was writing to Sainville, or thoſe from him, which ſhe frequently peruſed. She ſtill offered them relief, yet felt unable to ſoothe them with her uſual conſolations; for her mind was abſent, or engaged on far different objects; and ſhe ſcarcely liſtened to the whole of their melancholy tales—fatal effect of theſtronger paſſions! and eſpecially of love! To thoſe whoſe hearts are full of its emotions, the exerciſe of their accuſtomed kindneſs ceaſes

to be an enjoyment, and becomes a facrifice. It is impoffible to be truly good, whether in affairs of importance or the trifling details of daily occurrence, without poffeffing not only refined fenfibility, but a perfect freedom of mind and much leifure-time. But when we are deeply in love, not only the mind is not free or unemployed, but we are actually, every moment, occupied with the moft affecting train of ideas or melancholy reflections, and are defirous of abandoning ourfelves without referve to our happinefs or our mifery. Even a vifitor, who fufpends the flow of our tears, is as much an intruder, as he who difconcerts an affignation.

Subdued by an irrefiftible paffion, inceffantly perfecuted by the moft cruel reflections, humiliated by her inconftancy and her weaknefs, deftitute of friends or confidants, and feparated from her lover, lady Clarendon was juftly to be pitied. Yet fhe had two grand fources of confolation;

lation; that of having recovered her own esteem in sacrificing the dearest attachment to her duty, and the certainty that Sainville loved her. What evils will not this idea assuage! It predominates over every other sentiment, and is constantly recurring, or rather it is at all times present, even without being the object of reflection. It forms, indeed, not a thought, but a continued feeling, and is interwoven with our very existence.

In the mean while Sainville was far less happy. At a distance from the object of his passion, he had not even the satisfaction to know she loved him. He had flattered himself he should stay but a short time at Paris, and notwithstanding his impatience and his assiduity, he soon perceived his stay would necessarily be much longer than he had imagined. His refusal of the governorship appeared to every one the most singular thing in the world. Courtiers, who consider the most uncommon disinterested-

nefs as mere artifice, racked their invention to difcover the deep laid defign, or the ambitious project which caufed this refufal; but the ladies, who naturally refer to love every thing which to them appears inexplicable, difcovered the myftery without difficulty, nor did they doubt the fair Englifhwoman, who had fettled in Languedoc, was the fecret caufe of this facrifice. Sainville having afked the minifter what was the affair for which he was defired to come to Paris, only received vague anfwers; and he was completely miferable when he was informed that it would not be communicated to him for two months. On the other hand, as he was heir to part of his uncle's property, the confufion naturally arifing from his death and the fettlement of his affairs, the unavoidable difputes concerning the divifion of his property, and other fatiguing details almoft continually employed him. "What an odious way of life," faid he to the baron: "even if love

love did not urge me to return to my retreat, I feel that I ſhould ſoon be miſerable here. There is no freedom or tranquillity but in the country. Here we are obliged to ſubmit to the moſt inconvenient and ridiculous ceremonies. Every thing is painful to me, and I feel like a ſtranger out of my proper place. In ſhort, I am quite wretched."—"My dear friend," replied the baron, "do not flatter yourſelf it is the country you love; for the taſte it inſpires neither renders us miſanthropiſts nor moroſe. On the contrary it meliorates the heart, and leads it to indulgence. It is not your retreat, your meadows, your groves and gardens, that you regret ſo keenly; no, you ſcarcely know whether theſe have a livelier verdure than the Thuilleries. In your ſo-much-boaſted retreat you have but beheld one object, and you certainly enjoyed there leſs freedom and tranquillity than in this metropolis."

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding the remonſtrances of his friend, Sainville could not help abandoning himſelf to his miſanthropy. He totally neglected the moſt indiſpenſable duties of ſociety, ſhut himſelf up in his room, returned no viſit that was paid him, and abſolutely refuſed to enter into any kind of amuſement. He had even formed a reſolution never to alter this mode of life, when he received a letter from lady Clarendon to the following effect:

'I cannot but acknowledge that your 'laſt letter is unſatisfactory to me; for 'though it is of conſiderable length, it 'does not contain all the particulars of 'which I requeſted you to inform me. 'You ſpeak neither of your occupations, 'nor your amuſements; and why ſhould 'you be ſilent on them? Do you not know 'I ſhall always gueſs at what concerns you. 'You promiſed me that though you would 'not purſue diſſipation, yet you would not

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'ſhun amuſement, and that you would 'viſit your old friends and relations. 'Doubtleſs you have not forgotten this en- 'gagement. Why then do you obſerve 'ſo profound a ſilence on the ſubject? 'Why—ah! do not ſuppoſe I am ignorant 'of the cauſe. You are reſerved and ſo- 'litary, and ſhut yourſelf up alone in your 'chamber, with no other companion than 'your melancholy. In ſhort, you ſlight 'the counſels and the prayers of friend- 'ſhip. Do you imagine this conduct will 'convince me, you love me to exceſs? 'Ah! when I ſolicited you to enter into the 'pleaſures of ſociety, I did not imagine the 'vain amuſements of the world could ever 'have the power to weaken your attach- 'ment. I only wiſhed to keep you from 'falling into more dangerous reflections. 'Thus diſtant from you, I do not feel 'happy in knowing you paſs your time 'alone, and abandoned to your own 'thoughts. How many anxieties have I

'felt

'felt on this account, even before our 'separation, whenever, more unhappy, 'that is, more unjuſt to yourſelf than 'uſual, you went home to ſhut yourſelf 'up in the ſame manner. But then we 'inhabited the ſame neighbourhood, and I 'was certain to ſee you again the next day; 'yet even then I could not calm the 'fears that troubled my repoſe. Now 'I am at a diſtance of ſix hundred miles 'from you, imagine whether I can enjoy a 'moment of tranquillity. Do you ſuppoſe, 'you alone bear all the pains of abſence? 'Do you think it is not an equal privation 'to me? Ah! if I had no command of 'myſelf, I could never have had reſolution 'to quit this chamber, where your parting 'adieus ſtill echo in my ears. But I love 'to practiſe what I adviſe. I have recom-'mended the diſſipation of your grief by 'taſting the pleaſures that ſurround you: 'I go out, I walk or ride, I paint, I practice 'muſic, and do every thing I would do 'were you with me.

'I go

'I go every day to the little wood which 'your labourers have at laſt quitted. 'Tis 'a charming place, and I am happier 'there than any where, ſo many ob'jects ſtrike my view or preſent themſelves 'to my imagination, reminding me of the 'debt of gratitude I owe you. Theſe re'membrances I carry about with me every 'where; but it is delightful to me again 'and again to contemplate ſcenes ſo dear. 'I cannot deſcribe all I have felt in reviſit'ing the cypreſs ſurrounded with a little 'plot of greenſward and wild roſes. ''Twas there I ſaw you receive that 'dreadful blow which diſcoloured the 'ground with the blood you ſhed in my de'fence. I have placed an altar of marble 'at the foot of the tree, and planted it 'round with amaranths and other ever'greens. The altar has no inſcription, 'but the place it occupies ſerves inſtead of 'it, and plainly tells that it is dedicated '*To gratitude.* I go every morning to paſs

'a couple

'a couple of hours in the honey-ſuckle 'bower ſituated on the top of a rock, 'where you firſt accoſted me. There I 'view the Aude* breaking its waves 'againſt the arches of the bridge, and mur-'muring as it were at the oppoſing pile. 'There a kind of enchantment ſuſpends 'my accuſtomed train of thought; my 'mind and imagination repoſe, no other 'faculty but that of feeling exerts its 'power, and my heart enjoys a delicious 'tranquillity. Adieu! you would be the 'moſt inſenſate of mankind if you retained 'the leaſt hope, but you would be the moſt 'unjuſt if you were not ſatisfied with my 'ſentiments towards you.'

This letter, the tendereſt Sainville had yet received from Conſtance, he read over twenty times. It produced in his mind, what all the exhortations of friendſhip were

* A ſmall river of Languedoc, from which one of the Departments of France takes its name.

unable

unable to effect. The baron's advice, which had been rejected before with so much displeasure, was now listened to, and almost in all respects followed. One day, when the two friends had been dining together, the baron was quitting Sainville at five o'clock,—"And where are you going?" said the latter. "To the play," replied the baron; "you have nothing to do this evening, you had better come with me."—"What is to be played?"—"Andromache."—"Ha! a tragedy. No, I will not go."—"But you have not been to a play since your return to Paris."—"You know I could never bear tragedy; its forced unnatural sentiments and exaggerated scenes appear to me at perpetual war with common sense."—"Well," said the baron, "I will bet a wager, that if you come to see Andromache, it will give you a hundred times as much pleasure as to me, who have always preferred tragedy."—"What folly! I know

I know it by heart; I have ſeen it a thouſand times."—"But how have you ſeen it? Shut up in a box with women, talking of every thing but the play, of which you only heard a ſentence from time to time, and obſerving the principal actreſs, merely to criticiſe her dreſs and perſon."—"Then by your account a year ago I was a fool."—"No, but you were a man of faſhion, and conſequently inſenſible and frivolous. 'Tis not by deceiving thoſe women whom we deſpiſe; 'tis not with a head filled with petty intrigues and a cold and empty heart, that we can be ſuſceptible to the fine ſentiments of *Ariane* or *Zaïre*. To love tragedy, we muſt poſſeſs elevation of mind, ſenſibility and virtue. Debauchees and drunkards cannot admire what they are incapable of conceiving. To them the moſt ſublime heroes of Corneille and Racine will only appear like madmen; to them the moſt contemptible comic opera of a ſtrolling company will be more

adapted

adapted than *Phædrus* or *Cinna*. Come then, my dear friend", continued the baron, "and I will engage that Andromache will not now appear tedious." Though Sainville could not agree in this opinion, yet imagining the baron might poſſibly be right, he conſented to accompany him. They had no ſooner taken their ſeats, than the curtain roſe. The baron, who was curious to obſerve the effect of this piece on Sainville, ſat cloſe to him all the evening, and neglected for once the pleaſure of attending to the play to watch his friend. "Well," ſaid he, when the firſt act was concluded, "how do you like it?"—"I think," replied Sainville, "the actor who performs Pyrrhus is improved ſince I ſaw him laſt."—"But does this play appear ſo bad as you expected?" —"Bad! pſhaw! I never uttered ſuch an abſurdity. The part of Pyrrhus is a *chef d'œuvre*."—"Is it you who ſpeak; a *chef d'œuvre*, did you ſay? Ah, Conſtance! this

this indeed is a *chef d'œuvre* of yours."—"How ſo?"—"Becauſe by engaging your heart, ſhe has doubtleſs formed your taſte and improved your mind: And this is an effect that will laſt for ever; for even ſhould you ceaſe to love, yet no length of time would efface from your heart ſo deep an impreſſion. Thus, ſhould even your paſſion for Conſtance cool, you will always retain what ſhe has excited in favour of Racine *."—"I ceaſe to love!" replied Sainville; "no, never! never! I am to be pitied, it is true, but I have re-

* It is true the part of Pyrrhus contains three verſes which have been juſtly objected to:

"Je ſouffre tous les maux que j'ai faits devant
"Troye
"Vaincu, chargé de fers, de regrets conſumé,
"Brulé de plus de feux que je n'en allumai.—"

But the critic whom ſo ſmall a ſpeech prevents from feeling the uncommon beauties of ſo well drawn, and ſo great a character, ought rather to be pitied for the littleneſs of his mind, than admired for the accuracy of his judgment.

ſources within myſelf, and am become a ſtranger to liſtleſſneſs. I am never alone. I carry with me every where a paſſion which excluſively fills my heart and my mind. The imagination realiſes the dear object of all my thoughts; Conſtance is always with me. I ſee her charms, I hear her voice; ſhe is here."—At theſe words he ſtarted, as if ſhe were really preſent; and this emotion was ſo natural, that the baron was much affected by it. This converſation was interrupted by the commencement of the ſecond act. Sainville's' attention was conſtantly fixed on the performance, and notwithſtanding the baron's continually looking at him, which he felt as a reſtraint, he could not help repeatedly burſting into tears. The baron felt this as a triumph, and quitted the houſe charmed with the ſucceſs of his experiment. "Indeed," ſaid he to Sainville, "your eyes are ſo red, I know not how you can appear at the houſe where

we are to ſup, for they will diſcover that you have wept at the play, and that is quite countryfied and old faſhioned."—"I don't pretend to deny it," replied Sainville; "this piece from the beginning to the end has affected me ſtrangely; but then all its ſcenes and ſituations have a ſtriking reſemblance to my own. That woman ſo inſenſible to the moſt violent paſſion—ſo faithful to the memory of her huſband—ſo virtuous, ſo affecting! Could I avoid fancying I beheld lady Clarendon? And that lover ſo impaſſioned, yet ſo wretched—ah! how his tranſports and his ſufferings have agitated me! While I wept for *him*, I thought of myſelf, and that reſemblance is doubtleſs the only cauſe of the effect it had upon me, and of the emotion I ſtill feel while I talk to you on the ſubject."—"Believe me," replied the baron, "even without all theſe ſimilarities, the ſtrong and juſt repreſentation of the feelings that now occupy your mind, would have

have produced the ſame impreſſion. You have beheld an unfortunate lover, and you ſaid to yourſelf, 'tis I. When you ſee a lover intoxicated with his ſucceſs, you will ſay, juſt ſo ſhould I be, were I equally fortunate. 'Tis enough that you are in love to conceive all the extraordinary effects that may ariſe from the paſſion that rages in your boſom. Under whatever form love is repreſented to you, it will always unavoidably intereſt your heart." As the baron was ſaying this, the carriage ſtopped at the door of the viſcounteſs of Belleville's. "Come," ſaid he, "we muſt have done with this ſubject, and awaken quite a different train of ideas."—"Yes, yes," ſaid Sainville, "every man who would appear amiable and agreeable to a company of twenty or thirty people, ought to leave his underſtanding in his carriage. How fatigued I ſhall be," continued he; 'tis you alone have induced me to accept this invitation."—"Of fourteen or fifteen

you have received," ſaid the baron, "ſince you have been in town, this is the firſt you have deigned to accept, and I think that is a very ſmall tax on your politeneſs. Come," ſaid he, "let us get out, the door has been open this quarter of an hour."—"Indeed," replied Sainville, "I am half inclined to return home. I have a dreadful headach, and you may certainly make my excuſes."—"Oh, you cannot think of it, the porter and all the ſervants have ſeen you; it would be the greateſt folly in the world."—"What does that ſignify?"—"But the viſcounteſs will never forgive the affront, and you owe her ſome reſpect, for ſhe is your relation; and beſides——Go a little way further, La Pierre; the ſmoke of your flambeau comes in my face." The ſervant ſhut the door again, and the baron continued: "And beſides, do you remember all the kindneſſes ſhe has ſhewn you. Poor woman! ſhe has ruined herſelf for you, and made herſelf

herſelf the talk of the whole town."—"Well, ſhe has had a dozen lovers beſides me."—"A dozen! that is a great many; but you know it is very certain you were the firſt, and had you not quitted her ſo abruply and ſo cruelly——"—"She would have been beforehand with me."—"Well," replied the baron, "if you chooſe you may add this to your former ill-behaviour to her; but you tell me Conſtance is always with you; 'you ſee her, you hear her, ſhe is here.' Conſult her; let her decide."—"Indeed," ſaid Sainville, opening the coach-door, "you do whatever you will with me;" and ſo ſaying he got out, and telling the coachman two or three times to come *preciſely* at twelve, went ſlowly up ſtairs. As they paſſed through the firſt anti-chamber, the baron obſerved to him, "Ah, here are Madame de Tervures' ſervants. I wonder how ſhe can ſtay in a houſe where you are to ſup."—"Oh," ſaid Sainville, "all

thofe old affairs are almoſt blotted from my memory." They were now at the door of the drawing-room, where the company were juſt ſitting down to cards. As ſoon as he entered, all their eyes were fixed upon him, and eſpecially thoſe of the women, who beheld him with uncommon attention and curioſity, and then began to whiſper. Sainville, as he croſſed the room to pay his reſpects to madame de Belleville, heard diſtinctly all round, "Ah, how affecting! how charming!" The cards were now dealt, and every one began to play, when Sainville, going up to the chimney, ſaid to the baron, "explain all this to me; what means all this whiſpering, and what is it all theſe ladies ſay is ſo affecting?"—"Yourſelf," replied the baron ſmiling; "'tis you that are the ſubject of all this rumour."—"I? I?"—"Yes, moſt certainly; every one is relating your hiſtory, and deſcribing you as a man of the keeneſt

ſenſibility;

ſenſibility; and the ladies of courſe overflow with tenderneſs at the ſight of you. We will talk of this another time; in the meanwhile come and play at macao." Sainville ſhrugged up his ſhoulders, and with a cold and diſdainful air followed his friend, and took his place at the card-table. The baron did not ſtay many minutes, but went into an adjoining room to talk with the chevalier de Monfort, an old friend of his, who had juſt returned from a journey, and whom he had not yet ſeen. Their converſation ſoon turned on Sainville. "For God's ſake," ſaid the chevalier, "make me a little acquainted with the ſubject, for to hear of Sainville being violently in love, is to me the moſt ſingular affair poſſible. But what an object he has choſen to fix his heart on!"—"How ſo?" —"Oh, I know we muſt not believe every thing that is ſaid; but even if we allow a great deal of exaggeration in the hiſtory of lady Clarendon——"—"Ha, ha,—

 they

they ſay then that the foreigner is lady Clarendon."--"Yes, ſome Engliſhmen who are here, all agree, from what they can learn, that your fair incognita can be no other than that too-celebrated lady. And beſides, the government has made inquiry, and has diſcovered with certainty ——"—"Well, and what is this ſtory they relate of lady Clarendon."—"Oh, 'tis quite horrible; in a word, the whole affair is this: She is ſaid to have choſen lord Elby for a lover, who is brother-in-law to her huſband; that ſhe eloped with him and went to Ireland, and ſettled there on an eſtate belonging to lord Selden, an intimate friend of the earl's. The latter had a wife who, in conſequence of this adventure, died of a broken heart. After this, the earl, deſirous of marrying lady Clarendon, preſſed her to apply for a divorce. This, however, ſhe refuſed, and he at length diſcovered, that his friend and confidant, lord Selden, had become his

ſucceſsful

fuccefsful rival. Enraged and driven to defpair by this treachery, he fought and was killed by lord Selden. In the meanwhile, lord Clarendon came to an immenfe eftate, for which reafon her ladyfhip wifhed to make up the difference with him. She therefore contrived a ftory, returned to England with lord Selden, who, with her affiftance, fabricated fome letters, ferved as a confirming witnefs, and at length fucceeded in reconciling her with her lord, who, they fay, was in fact little better than an idiot. This poor deluded hufband went to live with his wife in retirement at an old caftle, where he died, and left the bulk of his fortune to his widow. It is faid that lady Clarendon, knowing the will would be fet afide, determined voluntarily to abandon a claim fhe could not eftablifh; but others fay a law-fuit deprived her of this fucceffion, and that being thus robbed of her fortune, deferted by lord Selden, and publicly difhonoured, fhe ba-

nifhed herfelf to France. This is a very curious ftory, but I relate it to you in the moft favourable manner, for there are other accounts fo truly atrocious, that it is impoffible to believe them. Indeed, people pity poor Sainville for having formed fuch an attachment, for all the follies he has committed on her account are known."—"What follies?"—"The duel he fought, and his extravagant expences. They declare alfo, that your advice alone has deterred him from marrying her; but they fay he is ruining himfelf for her; that he has bought her a very fine eftate; that he is building a magnificent houfe upon it, and that he has fettled twelve thoufand livres a-year on each of her daughters."—"Her daughters?"—"Yes, two children fhe has had by lord Elby, and who are now with her." Here the baron broke out with fo much impetuofity, that the chevalier was all aftonifhment. He endeavoured to the utmoft to refute thefe deteftable calumnies;

lumnies; but though he succeeded in some of the minutiæ, the result of the conversation only convinced the chevalier that lady Clarendon was the most artful and intriguing woman in the world, since she had even deceived so sensible a man as the baron. He took care, however, to conceal his opinion, while the baron was persuaded he had completely justified lady Clarendon. The latter determined not to communicate to Sainville a conversation which could only increase his misanthropic turn; and he returned to the drawing-room as the company were rising to go into the supper-room. The baron then coming up to Sainville, "Look," said he, "at madame de Tervures: I never beheld her so beautiful or so well dressed. She has certainly some design: it would be droll if you were the object of it; for her eyes seem to have no other point of attraction but yours." All the company were now gone into the supper-room

except madame de Belleville, who came up to Sainville and aſked him if he would not go in and take his ſeat. As he declined her invitation, ſhe replied ſhe was not ſorry for it, for ſhe had a headach and could not bear the ſmell of meat, ſo they would ſtay there together. "I dare ſay," whiſpered ſhe in a low tone of voice, "madame de Tervures will come back to us. I aſſure you I did not aſk her to ſup here.—See!—was I not right? There ſhe is." The viſcounteſs roſe, met her, and ſaluted her cordially; and, in the meanwhile, Sainville ſeated himſelf by the baron. The viſcounteſs preſently came up towards them, ſeated herſelf between them, and ordered a ſmall work-table to be ſet before her with candles and her work-bag. Madame de Tervures threw herſelf careleſsly into an arm-chair, which ſhe drew to the table oppoſite to Sainville. A ſhort ſilence enſued, during which the baron made his malicious obſervations,

and Sainville fell into a reverie; while madame de Belleville worked, and madame de Tervures, pretending to be abſent, ſighed from time to time. At length the viſcounteſs broke ſilence: " How comfortable we are here!" ſaid ſhe: " How glad I am I did not ſit down to ſupper!"—" And I too," ſaid madame de Tervures: " How wretched I ſhould have felt! In fact there are two things that ought to be baniſhed from ſociety—great ſupper-parties and viſiting.—As for myſelf, I grow quite idle and recluſe." The viſcounteſs ſmiled, and madame de Tervures, addreſſing herſelf to the baron, " Yes, indeed, " continued ſhe, " after eighteen years of age our love of diſſipation diminiſhes every day."—" But, madame," replied he, " you have ſo lately been at that age, that you muſt ſurely retain all its attachments."—" The enthuſiaſm of youth," ſhe replied, " produces a thouſand illuſions, which we

retain very long with a cold heart, but ſenſibility ſoon deſtroys them. We gain in ſentiment all we loſe in frivolity; and though, perhaps, we are, on the whole, leſs happy, we acquire an increaſe of intellect and an elevation of thought which forbid us to regret the empty pleaſures they ſupplant. We then applaud ourſelves for feeling inſenſible to innumerable objects which formerly charmed us, and the conſciouſneſs of a new ſpecies of excellence and ſuperiority makes us enjoy our privations, and conſoles us for our paſt errors by ennobling us for the future." Here madame de Tervures made a pauſe, that every one might have leiſure to feel the greatneſs of her mind. This facility of running on, frequently rendered her very ridiculous; but, at the ſame time, it procured her a great reputation for wit and intellect with people of inferior abilities. Madame de Belleville, who was placed in this claſs, liſtened to her

her with a mixture of admiration and envy. The baron, accuſtomed to flatter the ſex, was not much ſtruck with the affectation of madame de Tervures; and notwithſtanding his ſuperior diſcernment and refined taſte, ſeemed to conſider her as poſſeſſed of great eloquence, and a knowledge of metaphyſics very uncommon in a woman of three-and-twenty. But Sainville, quite diſguſted at her pedantry, took advantage of the ſilence that ſucceeded this long harangue, to aſk madame de Belleville if ſhe continued her box at the opera. This frivolous queſtion, which interrupted ſo learned a diſcuſſion, was a great relief to madame de Belleville, who now again entered into converſation, while madame de Tervures fell into a reverie. Sainville, through politeneſs, addreſſed her ſeveral times, and ſhe ſoon reſumed her uſual confidence, and renewed her endeavours to ſhine. The baron talked to her of her father's eſtate, where

ſhe

ſhe told him ſhe had lately paſſed ſix months, during which ſhe felt inexpreſſibly happy. "In the country," ſaid ſhe, "the mind ſeems to take a freer ſcope and a higher flight than when miſerably impriſoned between four walls, where the opinion of others becomes a baneful contagion, that deſtroys all originality and genius. My father-in-law's country-houſe is in a moſt tranſporting ſituation, clothed with wood and interſected with water; the grounds abound in pictureſque points of view, delightful gardens, and a vaſt variety of hills and dales. None of thoſe ſtraight walks that too often chill the imagination, (that power which is never ſo energetic as when perfectly wild and wandering,) no interruption to that ſolitude where every object invites to repoſe, and every thing *commands* meditation."—"'Tis true," ſaid the baron, "ſolitude has almoſt as many charms as you employ in its deſcription; but, with ſubmiſſion, you ſeem

ſo

ſo little formed for retirement, that it is difficult to conceive how you bore it ſo long."—" Oh, I love it paſſionately! 'Tis only there we can obtain or even hope for happineſs! There we feel no conſtraint, have no trouble of dreſs, and hear no ſlander. How charming would it be to paſs my life there!"—" But, my dear," ſaid the viſcounteſs, " you were ſurrounded by a hundred perſons, and performed a play three times a-week. I do not ſuppoſe that is the ſpecies of ſolitude the baron means to applaud." This ſudden interruption diſconcerted madame de Tervures, who bluſhed, and heſitated for an anſwer, while Sainville roſe and went to warm himſelf at the fire. A note was now brought to madame de Belleville, who, wiſhing to anſwer it immediately, went into another room; upon which the baron archly ſaid he would go and ſee if ſupper was finiſhed, ſo that Sainville and madame de Tervures remained alone.

She

She walked up to the fire, and ſetting her beautiful foot on the fender, began to complain of the cold; but as this produced no anſwer, ſhe contrived to let her fan fall. Sainville took it up, and as ſhe advanced to receive it, looking at him ſtedfaſtly, ſhe ſaid, "I did not expect, ſir, to receive ſo much attention from you: you were in ſo profound a reverie, that I ſcarcely imagined you perceived I was preſent. But," continued ſhe, "I am not angry; for I have apparently more ſenſibility than vanity, and therefore I cannot help letting you know, with my uſual frankneſs, that I have the greateſt pleaſure in the world in ſeeing you again." —"Abſence, then, is very advantageous to me: ten months ago, madam, I could not have flattered myſelf with the hope you now give me."—"Ah! I have reflected a vaſt deal in that interval," replied ſhe. "Ah! why did not theſe reflections take place at an earlier period! and precede the

follies

follies that have caused me so much pain and vexation!—Indeed you have very much mistaken my character!"—" I have no great share of penetration, but as you just now remarked, madam, you have so much frankness and openness, that——" —" Let me ask you one question, for we shall soon be interrupted.—Are you contented with your present lot? Are you happy?"—" Yes, madam," replied he; " although I have no hopes of success, I am a thousand times happier than I ever was in my life." At these words madame de Tervures blushed deeply. It is true, a man may sometimes wish to humble a coquette, but it requires a species of ferocity to brave her to her face, when she is young and beautiful, and confusion takes possession of her countenance. Thus Sainville, seeing the crimson suffusion of madame de Tervures, felt some remorse, and therefore changing his ironical and disdainful tone, said he should never forget the

the kind intereſt ſhe had juſt ſhewn for his happineſs. "No," replied madame de Tervures, ſighing deeply; "No, you hate me!"—"I, madam? I hate you?"—"I have acted fooliſhly, it is true; but if you knew all——" Here ſhe was interrupted by the doors of the room being thrown open, and the company returning from ſupper. They immediately ſat down to reſume their play, and at twelve the two friends took their leave. They were no ſooner alone, than the baron, laughing, ſaid to Sainville, "Well, was I miſtaken in my conjectures? How did you like the *tête-à-tête* I contrived for you?"—"But what became of you," ſaid Sainville, "all that time?"—"I was with madame de Belleville," replied the baron. "I went through her ſtudy, where ſhe was writing, and ſhe detained me to talk to me of you."—"Of me?"—"Yes; of you. You have no idea how much you are juſt now the talk of all the ladies.—The viſcounteſs

viſcounteſs herſelf ſhewed the moſt tender intereſt for you, and aſked me a thouſand queſtions, always aſſuring me at the ſame time, ſhe had not the leaſt curioſity in the world; and ſhe concluded by ſaying ſhe had in view for you a moſt advantageous and brilliant matrimonial connection."— "But," interrupted Sainville, "can you conceive this increaſe of kindneſs poſſible after ten months abſence and neglect?"— "Oh, all that is eaſily explained. Every one knows that the object of your paſſion is a foreigner, and there are a great many romantic circumſtances in this adventure of yours, to which an infinity of others are added by common report; and the converſation every where turns on nothing elſe. Hence every one's heart is intereſted for you, and your hiſtory, which no doubt will be forgotten in ſix weeks, gives you, for the moment, more celebrity than you ever yet enjoyed. Yet, we muſt confeſs, this enthuſiaſm is very ſingular

ſingular in a country where the paſſions are ſo ſeldom predominant."—"In fact," replied Sainville, "this enthuſiaſm has no exiſtence. People only pretend to admire the hero of a romance to have an opportunity of making a parade of fine feelings, they have never experienced, and of which they would perſuade us they are peculiarly ſuſceptible. This kind of converſation furniſhes the women eſpecially with certain phraſes which they are fond of perpetually repeating, ſuch as *ſolitude*, *ſentiment*, *paſſion*, *beneficence*, *delicacy*, *refinement*, *ſenſibility*, &c. &c.; and all theſe words coming in very naturally in my hiſtory, ſecure it ſome attention and celebrity. In fact, people engage in this kind of diſcuſſion merely to gain a hearing for their own particular mode of thinking; and this is proved by the abſent air, and appearance of fatigue exhibited by the hearers, who are obliged to wait with impatience till the

the end of the ſtory before they can act their part, and communicate their own reflections. Then it is they ſeem charmed with the ſubject, point out all its affecting traits with admiration, and the moſt frigid of the audience, as ſoon as they can again be ſpeakers, become the moſt enthuſiaſtic declaimers, and then hurry away to relate in ſome other company the very ſtory which they felt ſo tedious and inſipid before."—"And this obſervation," ſaid the baron, "is ſtill further confirmed when we reflect that the reputation of telling a long ſtory well is never acquired but by thoſe who relate in a pleaſing and entertaining manner. This is, in fact, the only quality that will pleaſe, in ſpite of all the pretenſions ſet up by ſenſibility."—"Nor am I ſurpriſed at it," added Sainville: "we take no intereſt in a tale unleſs we believe the narrator to feel truly intereſted in his ſtory. What impreſſion, for inſtance, ſhould we receive from hear-

ing a miser warmly praise an act of generosity? The more enthusiastic his language, the more indignation we should feel. And, in the same manner, a coquette declaiming in favour of true love and virtue, fatigues all her hearers without deceiving any."

This conversation, which began as soon as they were seated in the carriage, continued by the baron's fire-side till three o'clock in the morning. Lady Clarendon occupied a principal share of their attention, and Sainville flattered himself he should be able to devote to her the rest of his life. "Even if she does not love me," said he, "as passionately as I love her, at least she relies on my affection continuing for ever; for she knows that nothing can separate my heart from hers, and that her confidence and friendship will always be my most inestimable treasure." These ideas were soothing and consolatory to Sainville, and this opinion

which

which he attributed to lady Clarendon, ſtill afforded him a cheering ray of diſtant hope.

The next day he received from her the following letter:—

'Although you are often unjuſt towards 'me, I hope, at leaſt, you will not com'plain of my idleneſs or my negligence. 'What you ſaid to me the evening before 'your departure, on that ſubject, is ſtill 'deeply impreſſed on my heart. I forgive, 'I excuſe you—but I do not forget; for 'the animoſities of friendſhip are more 'durable than any other ſpecies of anger; 'and therefore, though I do not upbraid 'you, yet I am afflicted and unhappy. 'I have this moment received a long 'letter from M. de Verceil, with a full 'account of your occupations and manner 'of paſſing your time. I particularly 'requeſted him to write me on that 'ſubject, and he diſcharges the com-

'miſſion

'miſſion in that agreeable and elegant 'ſtyle you know him to poſſeſs. He informs 'me he has been deſired to propoſe to 'you an advantageous marriage; which, 'though I know it is a mere pleaſantry, 'has given birth to ſome reflections I can-'not help communicating to you.

'I am not ſurpriſed that you ſhould, at 'preſent, feel an invincible repugnance 'to accepting the propoſal; but if you 'expect that averſion to continue for ever, 'you are miſtaken: and I am determined 'not to ſuffer you ſtill to cheriſh an illuſion 'which may be prejudicial to you.

'Time and reflection will change the 'inclinations of your heart: of this you 'may be aſſured. With me you have 'nothing to hope.—I ſhall ever be dear to 'you; but rely on it, in a twelvemonth, 'perhaps in half that period, I ſhall no 'longer be the object of a paſſion which 'cauſes to me ſo much affliction and to 'you ſo much fruitleſs torment. Yes,

'you will one day behold me without 'transport. I shall no longer agitate your 'mind, nor will your destiny seem to 'depend on my will. Your peace will 'then be restored, but your heart is 'endued with too much sensibility, and 'your passions too ardent for that to be 'long a state of happiness to you. A 'more fortunate choice will, I am certain, 'soon make you forget your former 'passion. Do not tell me it is impos-'sible to love more than once: you can 'never persuade me to adopt that maxim. 'Have you not yourself indulged hopes 'of gaining my heart, notwithstanding 'the insurmountable obstacle that sepa-'rates us? You yourself, then, believe 'it possible. Yes, I am sure it is. As soon 'as you have rendered your heart abso-'lutely free, I will employ all the influence, 'friendship will permit me to retain, to 'induce you to enter into those tender 'bonds which are now offered you in vain.

 'To

'To be unattached to any object, and to be 'an insulated being, are the greatest of mis-'fortunes. I know it by experience too 'well! You will, perhaps, reply that lady 'Clarendon was a thousand times more 'unfortunate than Constance ever can 'be. But I can only attribute the mis-'fortunes of my life to my individual 'character; and notwithstanding all I 'have suffered, had Providence but 'granted me the blessing of becoming 'a mother, I should have exulted in my 'destiny, and every source of affliction 'and of tears would have been long since 'dried up. Yes, I am convinced the ten-'derness of maternal affection may become 'a consolation and a cure for every evil. 'That sacred sentiment which is more 'soothing than friendship itself, and more 'active than love, is also more disin-'terested and more permanent.—It is so 'deeply engraved on the heart, that nothing 'but its importance to society could

'render it a virtue. For, to conſtitute a 'virtue, effort and ſelf-denial are eſſentially 'neceſſary*. No virtue can exiſt where 'there is no combat ſuſtained. Hence 'the ancients very ingeniouſly repreſented 'virtue under the emblematical figure of 'force perſonified. Thus paternal love 'is not a virtue, but a natural and 'irreſiſtible propenſity, which is ſo ne-'ceſſary to mankind that the Deity has 'not ſuffered it to depend on the feeble 'deductions of reaſon. He does not tell 'us, in the form of a commandment,—'Think of ſelf-preſervation and of your 'children.—He has done more. He has 'given us an internal impulſe which the 'heart cannot repel without deſtroying its 'nature. Where is the man who can 'caſt a look of indifference on his own 'offspring at the moment of its birth? To

* Hence it is that, as Montaigne remarks, we ſay of the Deity, not that he is virtuous, but that he is good.

'ſtifle this divine inſtinct is no leſs than to 'revolt againſt Heaven itſelf.—It is to 'renounce the moſt valuable of its bleſſ-'ings. Such will certainly be one day 'your own thoughts, and ſuch are the 'ſalutary reflections that will lead you into 'the path of happineſs. I endeavour to 'foreſee and anticipate every event that 'can be intereſting to me, and love to 'tranſport myſelf to the proſpects of 'futurity. Not, indeed, on my own 'account, for my deſtiny is fixed,—but 'on account of thoſe who are dear to me. Thus it is that I conſole myſelf for your 'afflictions by the ſoothing conviction 'that time will diſpel them. I already 'receive ſatisfaction from the future lot 'that awaits you: I contemplate you 'ſtill cheriſhing your ſenſibility, but 'aided by additional wiſdom and pru-'dence, and therefore increaſing in hap-'pineſs; while you exult in the ſacred 'titles of father and huſband, and derive

'from

'from them that pure felicity which 'time can neither alter nor diſturb! 'Do not, then, reject thoſe ſoothing 'ideas; at leaſt, do not imagine they are 'chimerical. Your heart will not, at 'preſent, permit you to comprehend all 'their charms, but your reaſon will admit 'a glance of their future joys, and the 'hope of taſting them will one day offer 'ſome conſolation for your ſorrows.

'I know you infinitely better than I 'know myſelf; and though I am aware 'this letter will afflict you, yet I am deter-'mined to ſend it. You muſt therefore 'conclude, that I conſider it abſolutely 'neceſſary for you. Its contents will ſhock 'you at firſt, but when you remember from 'whom they come, they will impreſs them-'ſelves on your mind; and whenever they 'ſhall become uſeful to you, being con-'vinced that I approve them, you will 'the more eaſily adopt them. Do not, 'I beſeech you, anſwer this letter. Spare

'me reproaches and complaints, which 'will never alter my resolution, and 'would give me extreme pain. Be 'assured, the extravagances of the passion 'that blinds you will not eradicate an 'opinion founded on an intimate know-'ledge of your character, and on reason 'itself. Now that I have fulfilled the 'duty of a sincere and faithful friend, 'I promise to treat your weakness with 'tenderness, and to avoid, in future, this 'unfortunate subject. Adieu! I am 'melancholy and dejected! I generally 'read my letters over before I seal them, 'because I love to participate the pleasure 'they will give you: but this I shall not 'look at. No; I will not!—for I am 'determined to send it. Ah! when I 'afflict you, believe me, you are not the 'greatest sufferer!'

This letter produced the most cruel anguish in the heart of Sainville; of which

which nothing but his own letter can give an idea :

'At length, then, I may bid defiance 'to fate itſelf, ſince all its venom is ſpent! 'This morning I thought myſelf the moſt 'wretched of mankind! Good Heaven! 'what can I call myſelf now? Never, 'never did I yet enjoy a ſingle moment 'of unmixed happineſs; and for theſe 'three months paſt every day has 'produced a fatal revolution in my 'deſtiny! Am I, then, not yet at the 'height of my misfortunes? Have I no 'new calamities to apprehend? Who can 'aſſure me of this? What a dreadful 'affliction overwhelms me! A thouſand 'times have I felt my heart ready to break 'for objects far leſs diſtreſſing! No, no, 'torments yet more cruel are doubtleſs 'ſtill reſerved for me! You will at length 'hate me!—You will fly me! I ſhall loſe 'you for ever. Why then do you fear to

 'abandon

'abandon me to despair? You tell me
'you know me perfectly well, and yet
'you have the barbarity to rob me of the
'only consolation, the only phantom that
'can assuage my griefs! I can now no
'longer say—she relies on my affections
'—she pities me—or she is certain that no
'one ever loved as I love:—if it is true
'that so powerful a passion can ever cease,
'Constance at least knows me, and will
'be convinced that no other object can
'find a place in my heart. These were the
'thoughts that employed my mind, and
'deprived me of repose last night. Fool
'that I was! I preferred abandoning
'myself to these delusions, which bathed
'my pillow with delicious tears, to the
'balmy refreshments of sleep! Heavens!
'how bitter, how afflicting is this thought!
'Ah! how could you pen that cruel
'letter, that has robbed me for ever of
'such sweet illusions? Thus, then, the
'passion you inspire only appears to you
'an

'an ordinary attachment. You ſay—I 'ſhall ceaſe to love you—my deſtiny will 'no longer depend on you—and then 'a new choice—I cannot go on—I cannot 'delineate thoſe odious words! My hand 'trembles, and my pen refuſes to proceed. 'And you—and you—ah, do not fear 'ſuperfluous reproaches!—had you fore'ſeen the mortal blow you have given, 'your compaſſion would have ſpared me! ''Tis now too late.—In vain would you 'endeavour to undo your cruel work!— 'I ſhould attribute every thing you would 'now ſay to your pity; and, for the firſt 'time, you would be unable to convince 'me. And yet it is impoſſible for me to bear 'the ſtate to which you have reduced me. 'Yes: if you do not believe that this 'uncontrollable paſſion which rages in my 'boſom muſt determine my fate for 'ever—if you think ſo deep an attach'ment—the firſt and only love my heart 'ever knew—can ever receive thoſe de-

'tested bonds of which you have ventured to hold out to me the odious image;—in short, if you ever behold me such as you have painted my future condition, you cannot sincerely esteem me. Your pity is but weakness, and the frivolous and transient emotion that gives it birth, reflection will speedily destroy. But if I should really lose your esteem and your pity, what will remain? What will become of me? You will plunge me into a state of dejection a thousand times more insupportable than all the wretchedness with which you have so often seen me overwhelmed! Alas! was it really necessary to rob me of a consoling error, which almost stood in the place of happiness? I had, it is true, no hope; I felt too severely that love itself could not triumph over your vows and your griefs; I respected the delicacy of which I was the victim; nor could I even conceal that it only ren-

'dered

'dered you more interefting and more 'lovely in my eyes. The pleafure of 'admiring you, of elevating you above 'all others of your fex, of knowing that 'nothing in exiftence could be compared 'with you;—the delicious idea that our 'hearts, at leaft, were formed for each 'other, and that your thoughts confirmed 'my feelings—fuch was the happinefs 'which love procured me in fpite of 'adverfe fate. But now I perceive you 'no longer judge of me by yourfelf; you 'confound me with the common herd of 'mankind, and you feparate yourfelf 'from me. I know the time will come 'when you will acknowledge your injuf-'tice; but in the interval, what fears, 'what apprehenfions will poifon the en-'joyment of that diftant hope! Ah, 'why not at once reject and abandon 'me? Alas! while you thus increafe the 'diftance between us—while you rob 'me of life, you are faying to your-

 'felf,

'self, "He will ſoon forget me, and time 'will preſently conſole him for his loſs." 'This, this is the ſentiment that lies at the 'bottom of your heart:—ſuch is the 'opinion you entertain of me. Ah, 'how deeply is my heart wounded! Yes, 'you have deſtroyed me! You would 'ſhudder with horror could you witneſs 'the emotions I experience, and the 'ſtrange ideas and deſigns that preſent 'themſelves ſometimes to my mind. But 'whatever are my ſentiments and my 'projects, if you are ſtill intereſted 'for me, be not uneaſy. I will form no 'fixed, no final reſolution till I ſee you 'again.—On this you may rely, for I 'give you my word. But will you reckon 'any thing upon it? Alas! I can no 'longer gueſs what effect my letters will 'produce. Ah! what accumulated miſery 'have you not inflicted?—Adieu! Ah! 'do not afflict me; do not queſtion me— 'for I am unable to anſwer you! Alas!

'I know

'I know not myself what I shall determine; 'yet it would be dreadful to me to cause 'you any uneasiness. Ah! if you could read 'my heart you would not feel any: you 'would be certain, there is nothing, how-'ever dear to me, that I would not sacri-'fice to you; and that a single word from 'your lips will always have the power to 'change and to annihilate every resolution 'I form.—Once more adieu! Ah! how 'I love you!—Yes, my love of you even 'surpasses the misery I suffer!'

Sainville, however, did not feel his heart relieved by this letter; for he had only pourtrayed to lady Clarendon a small part of the sufferings he experienced, and these were still further increased by reflection. He did not communicate this to the baron, for a strange project employed his mind, against which he was certain the friendship of the baron would lead him urgently to protest; and therefore he deter-

determined carefully to bury it in his own breaſt. This laſt reſolution was a new ſource of uneaſineſs; for his paſſion for lady Clarendon had conſiderably ſtrengthened his friendſhip for the baron, who being his only confidant in this uncontrollable attachment, was now become a neceſſary adviſer and a boſom friend. His turn of mind too was ſuch as accorded with that of Sainville; and therefore his romantic character would not to him appear either ridiculous or exaggerated.

Sainville paſſed the remainder of the day alone, and in the moſt violent agitation; and though the baron came in the evening, he was denied. Sainville at firſt fearing he might betray his ſecret, dared not admit a friend whom he had till then treated with the moſt unlimited confidence. This reſerve was extremely irkſome to him; and when he heard a carriage rattling at his door, which he perceived from

from the window to be that of the baron, he felt an uncommon emotion, which ſtill increaſed when he beheld it as rapidly driving away. Leaning in melancholy attitude againſt the window-frame, he continued at firſt motionleſs; his hands claſped in each other, his head bending downwards, and his eyes rooted to the ground. At length unable to ſuppreſs his tears, "Ah, how wretched am I!" ſaid he, "ſince I am obliged to avoid the only friend I have in the world. Thus fearing the wounds of friendſhip, and inſenſible to its conſolations, equally fooliſh and ungrateful, I ſhall now be at the mercy of my fatal paſſion. Poor Verceil! What concern wouldſt thou not feel, if thou didſt but know what is paſſing in my breaſt! But to what purpoſe ſhould I relate to him theſe dark and confuſed ideas which thus diſturb my imagination? Could he bring back peace to this diſtracted boſom?—Ah! no; I ſhould but fruitleſsly afflict

afflict him—I have already but too much taxed his indefatigable friendſhip.—Yes; I will ſpare him that unneceſſary pain."

Sainville having abſolutely reſolved to quit Paris, paſſed the whole of the two following days ſhut up at home with ſeveral perſons with whom he had buſineſs; and then went to Verſailles, where the miniſter at length informed him of the buſineſs for which he had recalled him. The aſtoniſhment of Sainville was extreme, when he was told the object of it was to confide to him the execution of ſome buſineſs in England. His firſt impulſe was to refuſe it. "Reflect upon it," ſaid the miniſter, "before you decide. This commiſſion is a proof of confidence, which is ſo much the more honourable to yóu, as its object is to prevent a rupture between the two countries. Beſides, it will not, at moſt, employ you above ſix weeks."—"'Tis enough," replied Sainville; "I will accept it." He immediately received his inſtructions,

tions, and promifed to fet off the next day. He well knew the baron was detained at Paris by an affair of the greateft importance, and therefore could not accompany him. He therefore went the fame evening to announce this intelligence to his friend, and to take his leave. " Well, my dear Verceil," faid he, " do you know the minifter is fending me to England."—" Is it poffible?" cried the baron. " Figure to yourfelf," continued Sainville, " what emotion I fhall feel when I arrive in London, and pafs through Cavendifh-fquare, by the very houfe where fhe lived—when I approach fo near to the tomb of lord Clarendon!—I, who could never hear even the name of that capital or meet an Englifhman without emotion."

The two friends fupped together that evening, and did not feparate till midnight; and though Sainville went to bed, he could not fleep, nor even enjoy the leaft repofe. At day-break he arofe, and imme-

immediately ſet off. The baron, who was quite miſerable at being unable to accompany him, made his utmoſt exertions to terminate his buſineſs, in the hope of ſoon following him; but his endeavours were ineffectual; and being obliged to continue at Paris, he waited with great impatience for ſome intelligence of his friend. He did not, however, hear from him till five weeks had elapſed, when Sainville incloſed a letter for lady Clarendon, dated from Derbyſhire, to the following effect:—

'Having a few days liberty from buſineſs, I have quitted town to viſit the caſtle where lady Clarendon lived happy in the unreſerved indulgence of her amiable ſenſibility. The proprietor is abſent, and the ſteward, who is very obliging to ſtrangers, permits me to paſs the whole day in this extenſive caſtle. I lodge at the village—that is, I paſs the night there; but the reſt of my time I

'ſpend

'spend in the apartments where you re-
'sided. Great God! what an object there
'fixes my attention!—Your whole-length
'portrait, which still hangs in the saloon.
'The painted pannels of your study are
'removed, but when I look at the wain-
'scotting I fancy I see them. How I thrill
'with horror! how continually I weep!
'What a burning atmosphere I seem to
'breathe! 'Tis here you once so passion-
'ately loved! 'tis here you abandoned and
'forgot the whole world to devote all your
'thoughts to your passion!—Here every
'thing I behold reminds me of you!—
'I behold you every where!—Yes, I be-
'held you impassioned!—Yes, even you!
'—even my lovely Constance! What
'have I come hither to seek in so lonely
'a spot?—Alas! I know not!—I am no
'longer master of my actions—an ir-
'resistible impulse compels me.—I nei-
'ther reflect, nor can I be said to act; for
'I am no longer influenced by any motives
'of

'of my own. I no longer form any de-
'signs. I yield a blind obedience to the
'supernatural power that governs me.
'The images of despair itself have for
'me an irresistible attraction, if they do
'but present your figure to my imagina-
'tion. My reason grows wild in this
'castle, my heart seems to fix itself there,
'and I cannot tear myself away. I am
'now writing to you on the very table
'where you have written so often when
'love inspired your pen. Ah, wretched
'that I am! never shall I receive such im-
'passioned letters. It was no doubt here
'that lay the nosegay which caused you so
'many emotions. By the effect, that re-
'membrance had upon yourself, judge of
'mine. This appeal to your feelings is the
'only medium by which I can communi-
'cate my own—yes, to those very feelings
'which for ever deprive me of your love.
'Had you not once loved another to dis-
'traction, you could not conceive the vio-
'lence

'lence of my paſſion. Yes, I am not 'miſtaken. I am convinced that thoſe 'who have once loved to ſuch exceſs, can 'never love again. I paſs over repeatedly 'in my mind all the details of your hiſtory. 'You were then, what I am now become on 'your account. Yet you have overcome 'your paſſion; you live, you even enjoy 'tranquillity. But can you believe it poſ-'ſible I could bear to live if you abandon 'me? What do I ſay? You imagine that 'in ſix months I ſhall ceaſe to love you, 'and that another object——Yes, have 'you not even had the cruelty to tell me 'ſo? You will indeed be undeceived; but, 'great God! at what a price? To-morrow 'I ſhall return to London. Yet I only 'expect one gratification there, that of 'meeting two gentlemen who ſpeak of you 'with enthuſiaſm, Lord Selden and the 'phyſician who ſaved your life. For the 'latter I cannot help feeling a kind of filial 'affection. I liſten to him with delight, I

'behold him with veneration. The ſteward of this caſtle is the ſame whom you left here. Ah, what a lively intereſt I feel in his converſation! I prevailed with him to let me take a ſketch of a ſmall drawing of yours, which he found after your departure in your table drawer. It repreſents Cupid weeping, tied to the trunk of a hollow tree, on the back of which are engraved theſe words, *Faithful, though hopeleſs*. How precious to me is this little picture! How I flatter and pleaſe myſelf by reflecting that, when you imagined and drew it five years ago, it was myſelf you were repreſenting. This idea ſeems to enlarge the only intereſting period of my life, that in which I have known you—*Faithful, though hopeleſs!* By what prophetic inſpiration did you conceive a ſubject ſo deſcriptive of my feelings and my deſtiny. Alas! at that time I was ſeeking you without hope, diſguſted with every thing, becauſe nothing

'preſented

'presented me with your image. I merely 'vegetated, while you burned with an ar-'dent unbounded passion. You were in 'love, yet you knew not then even my 'name. Yes you loved, you were in the 'arms of my rival, and yet I existed. Ah! 'why did Heaven bring us into being 'under such distant skies? From the mo-'ment we beheld the light, the raging seas 'and bottomless gulfs divided us. Not 'even my native country is that of Con-'stance. A time once existed when we 'were both free, and I might have claimed 'her hand, or at least have disputed its 'possession. Adieu! I shall write you 'soon from London, and I shall see you in 'five weeks at the latest. Ah, Constance! 'Ah, how much my wretchedness deserves 'your pity!'

In fact, the unfortunate Sainville deserved the tenderest commiseration, for his stay in England had still more increased his passion for lady Clarendon. Every thing there

there presented her to his imagination under the moft attractive form, and he beheld her every where faithful, generous, and full of fenfibility. He had collected from lord Selden, from the phyfician, and from the fteward, an infinity of new and affecting particulars, which raifed his admiration for her to the higheft pitch; even her enemies foftened by four years of abfence and obfcurity, now rendered fome tribute to her greatnefs of mind, and all the world agreed in applauding the fuperiority of her underftanding, the brilliancy of her talents, and the charms of her perfon. Her numerous portraits, engraved in a great variety of dreffes, attitudes, and forms, every where met the eye. Sainville afking one day at a printfellers to fee all the engravings of her ladyfhip, one was fhewn him which he had never before feen, reprefenting her in a long mourning drapery, kneeling at the tomb of her hufband, and tracing her fatal vow upon the

marble. The wretched Sainville turned pale at the ſight, and almoſt fainted, but he puſhed it from him with horror, and haſtened out of the ſhop. He returned home, and by an unaccountable contradiction, that very day formed a reſolution to viſit the tomb of which he could not bear even to behold the repreſentation. In all the great paſſions of the ſoul there are inconſiſtencies which appear totally inexplicable to the cold obſerver, but which are eaſily ſolved by thoſe who have ſtudied the human heart. The emotions that ſpring from the ſoul itſelf are ſo intereſting, that even when painful, they ſtill poſſeſs irreſiſtible attractions. If even indifferent ſpectators love tragedy and fictious tales, that draw tears from their eyes, ought we to be ſurpriſed when we behold a wretched lover ardently purſue every thing that can awaken emotions of tenderneſs in his boſom? When his paſſion is at once violent and hopeleſs, he elevates even his

griefs into virtues, and convert shis lamentations and ſighs into conſolations. 'Tis a ſpecies of adoration that he pays to the object of his affection.

After ſeveral times changing his inclination, Sainville at length went the next day to the church, where the aſhes of lord Clarendon were depoſited. There, wild and trembling, and ſometimes abſorbed in ſtupor, or burſting into fury, he continued alone, near an hour, contemplating the monument. He ſhed no tears, for the moſt horrid ideas ſuſpended every tender emotion. At length, after a mournful and long-continued ſilence, aſcending the upper ſtep of the monument, he read the inſcription in large gold letters. " 'Twas here," ſaid he, " on this very marble ſhe threw her lovely limbs, when ſhe inſcribed it with the decree of my deſtruction—of my death." Here he pauſed, and fixed his eyes on the inſcription, while his blood boiled in his veins, his ideas became diſ-

 ordered,

ordered, and his imagination inflamed. At length he broke out, exclaiming, "Yes, 'tis too much to bear." He then put his hand to his ſword, but at that moment he heard the gates of the church creek upon their hinges, and ſeveral other viſitors came to ſee the tomb, while Sainville, in confuſion and deſpair, hurried precipitately away. He had ſcarcely quitted the church, when he began to ſhudder at the crime he had juſt been on the point of committing; but the pleaſantneſs of the day, and the clearneſs of the ſky, ſuddenly gave a new turn to his ideas, and he no longer felt any emotion but conſternation and remorſe.

Having, at length, ſucceſsfully terminated the buſineſs he was charged with, he ſet off on his return to Paris. On the road to Dover his carriage broke down, and he was obliged to ſleep at Canterbury, and the poſt being to go that night, he wrote to the baron as follows:

'I shall be at Paris in a few days, when 'you will see me more wretched than 'ever. Savage and desperate, and hateful to 'myself, that attachment which was once 'so dear to me, is now my torment. It 'consumes me with its fury, and is dege-'nerated into insensate madness. Ah! 'could I have foreseen the torments it has 'caused me, what would I not have done 'to have avoided it! The most wretched 'of mankind, even when destitute of hope, 'at least flatter themselves with projects 'of advantage and of happiness. But I, 'alas! have neither; I am reduced to that 'cruel anxiety of never knowing what to 'wish, that may assuage my sorrows. 'Tis, 'alas! too true, that lady Clarendon can 'never marry without suffering a moral 'degradation. She has indeed made a 'foolish vow; but, prejudice apart, she can-'not violate it without drawing upon her-'self at once the hatred and ridicule of 'mankind. 'Tis an action rendered sacred

'and

'and perpetual by the monument itſelf, 'by the curioſity of every traveller, by 'beautiful paintings and engravings, and 'above all by the public admiration, or at 'leaſt the aſtoniſhment of all who know 'her ſtory. Can I even wiſh this object of 'my adoration, who is ſo ſuperior to the 'reſt of her ſex, to quit the ſupreme 'rank where ſhe is placed by nature as well 'as by fortune, and herd among the un-'numbered crowd of the weak and the 'frivolous? No, after all I have ſeen, after 'all I have heard, I had rather ſhe were 'the miſtreſs of my heart, than the wife of 'my boſom. Perhaps in her heart ſhe 'bewails the engagement that ſeparates 'us. Perhaps even it might not be im-'poſſible to diſſuade her from her purpoſe; 'but, alas! that is an art ſhe has blotted 'from my mind. Timid and ſubjugated 'to her wiſhes, eſpecially in her preſence, 'I dare not indulge a hope, and only know 'how to reſpect, to adore, and to obey

 'her.

'her. Besides, would she ever forgive 'herself such a weakness? No, never. She 'would expiate it but by sacrificing me to 'her remorse; she would fly me, and I 'should lose her for ever. Yes, her virtue 'is less destructive of my peace, than the 'consciousness of its violation. Yet to 'renounce her entirely, and resign her 'love—No, I never can. But tell me, 'my dear friend, do you think there exists 'a human being who can be compared to 'Constance? She possesses not only youth 'and beauty, but wit, sensibility, and su-'perior talents. Yes, she possesses every 'thing. Such is the object I love. Her 'husband is no longer living; I am per-'fectly free, and her heart is affected with 'my passion; yes, deeply affected. I am 'certain of it. Yet we shall never be 'united. I cannot live in the state in which 'I am at present. I sink, I die. Oh! how 'happy are they who, though deprived 'of happiness, can still form new hopes,

'and

'and abandon themſelves to the enchant-'ing dreams of an imagination inflamed by 'love. But to me no proſpect can pre-'ſent the image of felicity, nor delude me 'with a ray of hope. Sometimes an inſup-'portable languor and dejection ſeems to 'overwhelm and annihilate me; ſome-'times, agitated by a thouſand various 'feelings, I experience a rapid ſucceſſion 'of violent and contending emotions. 'Ah! where are you, my dear Verceil, while 'your unfortunate friend, abandoned to 'his miſery, conſumes himſelf in vain la-'mentations? Yes, you enjoy the ſweeteſt 'tranquillity, and Conſtance is happy and 'peaceful in her retirement; but I, a prey 'to the moſt fatal torments, ſuffer and 'complain in ſolitude, abandoned by all 'the world. Alas! who can ſooth me 'with the balm of pity, if I cannot even 'myſelf give an idea of the pains I ſuffer. 'Adieu, my dear Verceil! I know not 'whether you will receive this before my

 'arrival,

'arrival, but I was unable to resist the in-'clination to write. Formerly I could 'assuage and console my heart, by con-'fiding all its griefs to my friend, but they 'are now so cruel that I cannot even de-'scribe them without aggravating that 'sorrow, which no human consolation can 'henceforth alleviate. Adieu! I shall set 'off to-morrow at day-break; my car-'riage having had an accident, I am 'obliged to pass the night here. Ah, what 'a night of horror! I reflect with anguish 'that a sea divides me from all that is dear 'to me, and yet soon——Ah, my friend, 'I am the most wretched of mankind! 'Once more adieu; the wind is high, the 'rain beats with fury against my windows, 'and a storm seems to be rising; but to-'morrow I shall cross the sea. I can dis-'cover but one way in which to hope for a 'termination to my miseries. Ah, may 'the tempest still continue to rage! 'Adieu!'

Sainville

Sainville immediately diſpatched this letter to the poſt, and then, overcome with fatigue, went to bed. But being wholly engroſſed by the ſtrangeſt and moſt melancholy of projects, he was unable to enjoy a moment's repoſe. He roſe with the ſun, and immediately ſending for poſt-horſes, ſet off. He arrived at Dover, and, though the wind was contrary, perſiſted in embarking: the wind ſoon became extremely boiſterous, the atmoſphere dark, and a moſt dreadful ſtorm came on.

Sainville beheld this new phenomenon with equal curioſity and indifference; but when the danger became conſiderable, the image of Conſtance began to trouble his imagination. "What!" ſaid he; "and ſhall I periſh in obſcurity here, at a diſtance from her I love? ſhall I die without again beholding her—and leave her wholly ignorant of the ſacrifice I meditate? Ah, ſhe will never know all that I would have done for her ſake! Ah, how much more tenderly

would ſhe have deplored my fate, had ſhe known the full extent of my paſſion!" This idea inſpired him with horror, and made him contemplate his approaching deſtruction with grief and terror, though but a few days before he had formed the deſperate reſolution of putting a period to his life.

At length, however, the wind abated, the tempeſt paſſed away and was ſucceeded by a calm. Sainville beheld the land with tranſport. "Oh, Conſtance!" he exclaimed, "I ſhall then once more behold you." At theſe words tears trickled from his eyes in ſpite of his endeavours to ſuppreſs them. Thus, his impetuous paſſion ſometimes ſoftened him, and ſometimes redoubled his emotions; at once transforming his character and governing his will. He was no longer able to command himſelf; his virtues or his errors, his courage or his weakneſs, were the effects of love alone.

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In the meanwhile he difembarked at Calais, and without further delay purfued his route. He went immediately to Verfailles to give an account of his miffion, and then fet off for Paris without delay. He there fent for the baron, who arrived prefently after. They met each other with great kindnefs and affection, but Sainville avoided every explanation. The baron having now finifhed his bufinefs, afked his friend, whether he intended foon to return to Languedoc? "Yes," faid Sainville, fighing, "I fhall fet off to-morrow morning."—"I am glad of it," replied the baron, "I am now at liberty and will accompany you."—"My dear friend," faid Sainville, "how extremely burdenfome to you I am become!"—He paufed, and a violent agitation forbid him to proceed. He walked with emotion acrofs the room, and leaned againft the chimney. The baron much ftruck, and deeply affected at

the settled melancholy and the entire change he observed in his appearance, would not hazard a reply, lest he should add to his distress. He therefore took a few turns across the room, and then coming up to him, "At what hour," said he, "shall we set off?"—"Whenever you please."—"Well, let it be at day-break." "Agreed."—"I must give some orders to my servants, and then I will return and pass the night here. I have several letters to write, and I will sit in your study, and call you in the morning myself." Sainville made no other answer than taking his friend's hand, and pressing it affectionately between his own. When the baron was gone to give the requisite orders for their departure, Sainville called monsieur Renaud, and told him, that instead of going with him, he was to set off the next morning at day-break for Toulon. "You will take that letter," said he; "it

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is addreſſed to monſieur Herbert a banker there, who will provide a lodging for you, and furniſh you with whatever money you may want. All this is a ſecret, even from the baron; and as he is coming back, I cannot tell you more now, but I will write down to-night what you are to do for me. You ſhall have the paper before you ſet off. When monſieur Renaud was gone, Sainville claſping his hands, and raiſing them mournfully towards heaven, exclaimed, "All my orders are now given, and in a month hence my deſtiny will be irrevocably fixed. Ah, Conſtance! a word, a ſingle word from your lovely lips, might ſtill——But no, this fatal reſolution muſt be accompliſhed, though I cannot think of it but with horror—Yes I perſiſt in my determination. I feel ſome inviſible power urge me irreſiſtibly on; and notwithſtanding the moſt dreadful preſentiments which chill my ſoul with horror, I reſign myſelf to my fate."

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The baron coming in, interrupted these reflections. Sainville went to bed, and when his friend quitted him, he wrote a letter to monsieur Renaud, which he ordered to be immediately given to him.

At day break Sainville arose, and entering the study, found the baron sitting in a profound sleep in an arm-chair. Sainville paused in silence, and having contemplated him some moments with emotion, seated himself near him, and passed more than an hour in that situation, unable to disturb the repose of his friend. At length the baron, stretching himself and rubbing his eyes, awoke, and with extreme surprise beheld Sainville sitting close to him. The baron inquired what was the hour? and Sainville exclaimed, "What, my dear baron, have you been up all night!"—"Yes, I informed you I should, and that I had some letters to write."—"Letters! where are your letters then?"—"You are very particular."—"And so you have

passed

paſſed the night in this arm-chair."—"Yes, certainly, I was willing to be ready to go before daylight, and yet I have been aſleep inſtead of calling you and ſetting off; but let us make haſte and depart without further delay." With this he aroſe and quitted the room. Sainville followed him, and the carriage being ready, they entered it and ſet off. The baron, who during four-and-twenty hours had not ventured to pronounce the name of Conſtance, at length ventured to ſpeak of her. "You will ſoon," ſaid he, "ſee her again, never to part from her more." At theſe words Sainville ſhuddered, but immediately recovering himſelf, "Yes," ſaid he, "in two days I ſhall ſee Conſtance, and I reflect with pleaſure that my preſence and converſation will diſpel the uneaſineſs to which my late letters may have given birth."—"My dear friend," replied the baron, "if you are but a little more rational, how happy we ſhall be when

we are all three again united, and always pafs our time together.—The idea feems to affect you."—"Ah!" interrupted Sainville, "for God's fake talk to me no more of happinefs, nor of the future—the wretched look forward with indifference. Ah! what fufferings could I anticipate that can be compared —— but let us quit this fubject." So faying he let down the glafs and put his head out of the carriage to hide his face from his friend, and continued in that pofture near a quarter of an hour. The baron fighed and was filent. At length Sainville, however, made an effort to renew the converfation; but he only fpoke of the moft indifferent fubjects, and that with a kind of abfence and melancholy, which increafed the uneafinefs of the baron. The following day paffed nearly in the fame manner, and Sainville's mind even appeared ftill more depreffed. In proportion as he approached Conftance, he felt his tormenting griefs increafe, and

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restraint gave still greater force to his despair.

At length they arrived. As they entered the avenue that leads to the castle, the baron said to his friend, "Will you not go immediately to Constance?" Sainville only answered by a sign; for he was too much agitated to speak. "Well," said the baron, "I shall get out here, and will expect you to dinner." So saying he stopped the carriage, and squeezing his friend's hand, mournfully quitted him. Sainville being now alone, collected all his fortitude to prepare for the interview which he at once desired and feared. But when he beheld the house where Constance dwelt, an undescribable and confused emotion of pain and pleasure made him burst into tears. In vain he endeavoured to overcome it by reasoning with himself; a general tremor seized his whole frame, and he seemed to feel the deep, the mortal wound of his heart opening afresh; yet

yet at the ſame time his boſom palpitated with joy, and he was unable to diſtinguiſh or comprehend the various oppoſite ſenſations he felt. At length he arrived at the door, and having haſtily wiped the tears from his cheeks, he hurried out, while the accuſtomed voice of his beloved reached his ears. He darted into the houſe as ſoon as the door opened, croſſed a ſmall court that led to the garden, and immediately threw himſelf at the feet of lady Clarendon. For ſome moments they were both unable to utter a ſingle word, for an equal emotion deprived them both of ſpeech. Sainville preſſed the hand of Conſtance between his own, and fixed his eyes on her, while ſhe was rooted to the ground, ſhocked at the cruel change in his appearance. Hence, ſhe contemplated him with grief, unable to reſtrain the tears which ſoftly fell, unperceived by her, on the hands of her lover. Feeling herſelf grow faint, ſhe ſank upon a bench,

bench, and in a throbbing voice, "We are then once more united," ſaid ſhe, "ah, do not again forſake me!" Theſe few words revived all the ſorrows of Sainville, who raiſed his eyes to heaven, but made no reply. "Now," ſaid ſhe, "I am happy, for I feel that you are reſtored to me; but thoſe letters you ſent me from England—ah! what anguiſh they have occaſioned me!"—"That cruel expedition," ſaid Sainville, "has at length confirmed all my doubts."—"Alas! you muſt yourſelf have perceived what an invincible obſtacle divides us; but friendſhip at leaſt——"—"Friendſhip! no; you ſtill indulge a far more different hope. *Time and a new attachment*, you ſay, may change my heart. Have you not believed it poſſible? Have you not told me ſo yourſelf?" The tone of bitterneſs with which Sainville pronounced theſe words made Conſtance ſigh. "Ah!" ſaid ſhe, "I now reproach myſelf with having cauſed you

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ſo much pain! I was too haſty. You were not yet in a ſtate to liſten with tranquillity to the truth."—"You perſiſt then in the ſame opinion?"—"I will never deceive you, even though I riſk your diſpleaſure. Alas! I doubt not the ſincerity of your attachment, yet I may juſtly venture to expect from time the ſame effect it produces on every other heart."—"'Tis enough," cried Sainville.—"Ah! if you could but perceive the full extent of your barbarity, you could then offer me but one compenſation; yes, had you entertained a juſt opinion of my paſſion, I ſhould then be a thouſand times leſs wretched; yes, you will one day diſcover your injuſtice—but it will then be too late."—Sainville pauſed; and lady Clarendon, overcome by theſe bitter reproaches, was at firſt unable to reply. Then raiſing her eyes, which overflowed with tears, to Sainville, "'Tis true," ſaid ſhe, "I have done nothing that can confer any happi-

neſs on you, and am the cauſe of all your ſorrows. Such is my unhappy lot! And that nothing may be wanting to complete my misfortunes, you now accuſe me of ingratitude!"—"Of ingratitude!" exclaimed Sainville with emotion; "Oh heavens! can you imagine ſo; alas! I accuſe not you, but my unhappy deſtiny."—"Before I knew you," ſhe replied, "I loved; yes, ſacrificed every thing to love, and now I would ſacrifice every thing to friendſhip——."—"What do you ſay?" interrupted Sainville; "Great God! is it poſſible then?—ah, Conſtance! if to reſtore me to life it were neceſſary to——I cannot, dare not proceed. Ah! could your friend—your deſpairing friend, were he dying at your feet, obtain the ſacrifice of a too raſh and empty vow?—You fear a new engagement would excite the public attention; but a ſecret union may render both our lives ſupremely happy. Life is ſhort, and time is valuable; yes, more

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ſo, perhaps, than you are aware. Yes, I dare ſtill to embrace your knees, to conjure you to pronounce my doom: But reflect that it is for the laſt time, and will be irrevocably fixed for ever."—" Great God!" replied Conſtance, " and is it in returning from London that you can reſume your hopes?—in quitting thoſe ſcenes, where every thing has preſented to your view the important duty by which we are ſeparated, where you have followed my life ſtep by ſtep—where—ah! yes, I doubt not you have yourſelf read that fatal vow, thoſe indelible characters; the temple, the tomb, all theſe horrid objects muſt be ſtill equally preſent to your memory as they are to mine; with what lively force would they not ſtrike your imagination, were you to behold me violating ſo ſolemn an engagement? They would purſue you to the foot of the altar, where you would receive this perjured hand which delineated it on the marble! I cannot ſupport the idea.—Inſenſate

ſenſate friend! can you think that by diſhonouring me, and conſigning me to the bittereſt remorſe, you could retain even the ſhadow of happineſs."—" 'Tis too much," replied Sainville; "forgive this laſt attempt—yes, the laſt!—I will no longer oppoſe your arguments, of which each day ſeems to add to the number; for ſuch alone is the progreſs I have made in your affections. I no longer complain; my reſolution is fixed—nor is this the firſt moment of its formation."—As he pronounced theſe words, Sainville, who till then had continued on his knees, aroſe, and, with a ſolemn melancholy air, ſeated himſelf by her. He was ſilent; and dejection and conſternation took poſſeſſion of his features. His eyes, wild and penſive, no longer ſought thoſe of Conſtance; while ſhe, amid the combat of love, of reaſon, and of duty, was too much abſorbed in grief to obſerve her unhappy lover: ſhe even wiſhed him to leave her, that

that ſhe might weep and deplore her unhappy lot without control. After a pauſe of profound ſilence, Sainville, ſtill more embarraſſed and conſtrained than herſelf, terminated the interview, and tore himſelf away, ſighing bitterly, and leaving her almoſt as much an object of pity as himſelf.

When he arrived at the caſtle, the baron was waiting dinner for him; but Sainville declared he was unable to eat, and hurried immediately to ſhut himſelf up in his chamber. The poor baron was alarmed and afflicted for his friend. He had hoped lady Clarendon would eaſily calm the agitation of a heart, over which ſhe held ſo abſolute a dominion; but when he obſerved Sainville more gloomy and wild than ever, he began to be ſeriouſly uneaſy. Yet he dared not go to him, and therefore paſſed frequently near his apartment, coughing or calling to the ſervants, and flattering himſelf he would open the door; but all in vain. In ſhort, in lieu of

of returning to his apartment, he ſat in the ſaloon, that he might continue near him. At four o'clock Roger croſſed the ſaloon with a baſin in one hand, and ſome pens in the other. "Where are you going, Roger?" ſaid the baron. "The marquis," ſaid the ſervant, "has aſked for ſome pens, and I am taking the opportunity to carry him ſome broth."—"Some broth!"—"He has eat nothing to-day, and while I am giving him theſe pens, I may induce him to accept it."—"Ah! yes, good Roger, endeavour to prevail with him, and come back this way."—"I have juſt been ſpeaking to him. Good Lord! how pale he is, and how ſadly changed!"—"And he is going then to write?"—"Yes, but there is no haſte, for the poſt will not go till Monday."—"Well, Roger, go and prevail on him to eat the broth." Roger preſently returned. "Well? Well?" ſaid the baron; and Roger made no other anſwer than

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ſhewing him the empty baſin, which gave the baron the greateſt pleaſure; for he had been tormented during two hours, with confuſed and gloomy thoughts, which he endeavoured in vain to chaſe from his imagination.

Towards evening Sainville, at length, quitted his chamber, and joined his friend. His countenance was pale and wan, his eyes red and ſwollen, and his voice feeble: yet he had ſomething tender and affecting in his appearance and manner, which ſtruck the baron as a happy omen. Exceſſive grief irritates the mind, and renders it wild and inacceſſible. In general, it is only when that abates that the heart is open to the ſoothing whiſpers of ſenſibility. Sainville came up to the baron, and made ſome excuſes for having left him ſo long alone, and the neceſſity he felt of quitting him once more, by again going out.—"But," replied the baron, "you will at leaſt be with me at ſupper?"—"No," ſaid Sainville; "I am extremely fa-

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tigued, and ſhall go to bed very early."—"Then we ſhall have no opportunity for converſing together to-night."—"No, my dear Verceil, and I beg it as a favour you will not wait for me; beſides, you will not hear my carriage: I ſhall come back on foot, and ſhall go directly to my chamber."—"Very well; you know how eaſy I ſleep in an arm-chair; I will wait for you in your ſtudy."—"No; I conjure you not to think of it. We ſhould ſit up all night talking; and, indeed, I am in great want of reſt, as you are alſo, my dear friend, for you have ſcarcely taken any theſe many days paſt."—"Well, I muſt yield. I ſhall not ſup, and will go to bed at nine o'clock. We ſhall, however, take our breakfaſt together—ſuppoſe in the little grove. That will be charming. What do you ſay?"—"Ah! my dear baron—to-morrow!"—"At what hour ſhall you riſe?"—"Alas! before you to a certainty; but I muſt leave you. It is growing quite dark."

dark."—"And what difference does that make to you?"—"Conftance is waiting for me, and the time is come—adieu, my dear baron, adieu." Sainville fpoke this with fuch emotion, that the baron could only catch a few words here and there, of which he could with difficulty comprehend the fenfe. They were alfo without lights, the evening having clofed in upon them, and the darknefs of the faloon favoured Sainville, by partly concealing from the baron his trouble and agitation. At length he arofe, and preffing his friend's hand with ardour to his breaft, repeated adieu, adieu, and then hurried away.

The baron, furprifed and alarmed, without well knowing why, remained a few moments motionlefs in his chair. The plaintive accent of this laft adieu ftill vibrated on his ear, and a confufed prefentiment chilled him with horror. At this period Roger came in with lights.—"Where is Sainville?" faid the baron with a wild air.

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"He has juſt got into his carriage and driven off."—"And where is he going?"—"To the cottage."—"Are you certain of that."—"Yes, very certain. I ſaw him ſet off, and heard the orders he gave the driver."—At theſe words the baron felt great relief; and being ſatisfied Sainville was with Conſtance, he diſpelled all his fears. He went up to his chamber, and deſirous of amuſing himſelf took a book; but an invincible abſence of mind rendered him totally incapable of applying to any thing. At length he determined to go to bed, though he had little hope of enjoying repoſe.

If in the career of life there are innumerable rocks which human wiſdom can neither foreſee nor avoid, we alſo frequently meet with a happy train of circumſtances that naturally lead us to forget our own intereſt, and perform the moſt generous actions. In the paths of virtue, as well as the career of vice, when we have advanced to a certain point, we find our-

ſelves ſo deeply engaged, that we are wholly unable to recede. Self-love raiſed into a ſublime ſentiment, becomes a primary principle; the whole character is elevated, the mind enlarged, and the intellect rendered more comprehenſive. In this happy progreſs, the farther we advance, the leſs difficulty we experience. At firſt we proceed by ſlow degrees, but ſoon we accelerate our ſteps, and at length are carried irreſiſtibly forward by the faſcinating charm of perceiving our ſtrength and our faculties increaſe. The baron de Verceil was by no means a great and elevated character. His friendſhip for Sainville, though ſtrong and affectionate, was long no more than an ordinary regard, and he at firſt conſidered the attachment of the latter to Conſtance as a mere amuſing intrigue; but he no ſooner perceived this paſſion would govern his deſtiny, and give birth to much unhappineſs and miſery, than his uneaſineſs and his commiſeration gave energy to his friendſhip, and he gradually

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and naturally fell into a ſpecies of devotion for him, which ſoon exceeded all bounds. He loſt all his iraſcibility (for we are not eaſily offended but when our attachment is ſlight); he no longer regarded any ſacrifices, he ſubmitted to them without a combat, and conſidered them as nothing. In ſhort, finding in his own heart a ſure pledge of his friend's warmeſt gratitude, he never ſought for any proof of it, and became a diſintereſted, a generous, and an enthuſiaſtic friend.

When Sainville arrived at the cottage, he was informed that Conſtance was walking in the garden, where he immediately joined her. The ſerenity of the evening, the charms of the moonlight ſcenery, the delicious perfume of the roſes and hawthorns, the ſeaſon of the year, and the hour of the evening, all recalled to Sainville's mind a remembrance at once gloomy and faſcinating. 'Twas here, 'twas by this ſoft light, and through theſe fragrant

bushes, which so sweetly embalmed the air, that he first beheld those lovely features *. 'Twas here he first conceived the vain hope of a happiness, now destroyed for ever. Every moment revived some image of what he had irrecoverably lost. Trembling and sighing, an irresistible charm inebriated his soul, while his bursting heart abandoned itself to the keenest anguish. His hope was extinguished, his illusions vanished, and that sensation of pleasure, which he still lingered to part with, was but converted into an increase of torture.

He advanced, and perceived Constance seated on a mossy bank; her head reclining on her hand, and her hair falling in disordered tresses on the arm that supported her, of which it concealed a part. She seemed in a profound reverie; her eyes

* That is, for the first time without her veil and bonnet.

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were

were fixed upon the earth, and the reflection of the moon, while it added to the paleneſs of her countenance, rendered it more intereſting. Notwithſtanding the melancholy in which ſhe was abſorbed, the unalterable ſerenity of her ſpotleſs mind was apparent. That angelic, that characteriſtic ſoftneſs, gave a celeſtial expreſſiveneſs to the languiſhing ſenſibility of her countenance, at once noble, tranquil, and affecting, which had never preſented, even to the eyes of her lover, the union of ſo many charms. While he pauſed to contemplate her beauties, a ſigh eſcaping from the bottom of his heart ſurpriſed and ſtartled Conſtance, who, ſuddenly turning her head and beholding Sainville, ſcreamed aloud: "What," ſaid he, "am I then an object of terror to you?"—"Indeed I did not expect you—I was in a reverie—I thought myſelf alone. How happens it that you are come ſo late? Do you bring me any news?"—"News! no; none at all."

all."—"I was in hopes you would have come again in the courſe of the day."—"I had ſome letters to write."—"Letters to-day?—I do not know why, but you have a myſterious air to-night, which makes me uneaſy."—"I aſſure you I have had a great deal of buſineſs to do. The night is come, and I was deſirous to ſee you once more."—"Muſt we then part ſo ſoon?"—"Oh heavens!" replied Sainville, claſping his hands with the moſt mournful expreſſion. "What is the matter?" ſaid Conſtance. "Ah, ſee where we are," ſaid Sainville; "this time twelvemonth you were here, and I behind this hedge—at this very hour I firſt beheld thoſe adorable features. Ah, what a happy moment! at that period I not only ſaw the moſt lovely of women, but I even dared to indulge the moſt flattering hope. Since that time the whole of my life ſeems to have paſſed away; for to exiſt without plans of happineſs, or a proſpect of

of enjoyment, is not to live—and yet you are tranquil and at peace, and the moſt frantic paſſion has not been able for a ſingle moment to ſhake your reſolution. You have rejected me without remorſe and without pity. No, I can never deem that virtue, which is but inexorable cruelty; I can only view it as apathy, and conclude you hate me. Ah, Conſtance!" continued he, throwing himſelf at her feet, "had you but once acknowledged that in your heart you grieved for the ſuperſtitious obſtacle that oppoſes my happineſs!—If you do but really love me, how blameworthy muſt be your conduct. Oh ſpeak! let me read the language of your heart; a ſingle word may change my deſtiny, or ſweeten every ſacrifice it exacts." Sainville ſaid this with a vehemence that gave Conſtance much pain, and ſhe ſtarted up as if ſhe would have fled from him. Enraged at this, Sainville roſe and ſaid, "Nothing remained to complete

your cruelty, but to feel terror at the ſight of me."—"Who? I?" ſaid Conſtance. "No; never."—"At length," continued he, "you will no longer be importuned with vain ſolicitations. I muſt quit this place, to me ſo dangerous. Yes; I muſt go."—"But we ſhall meet again to-morrow? come early, and I will promiſe to paſs the whole day with you." At theſe words Sainville appeared abſent and thoughtful; then collecting all his fortitude, he ſeized her hand, preſſed it to his lips, but immediately let it fall, and turning from her, hurried away with precipitation. As ſoon as he arrived at the extremity of the garden he pauſed, and leaning againſt a tree, "What!" ſaid he, "is it then all over? Yet there is ſtill perhaps time; yes, I will declare to her my intentions; her heart will perhaps be ſoftened; one word from her, and——yes, I will no longer deliberate." As he pronounced theſe words, he haſtened back; but when he arrived

at

at the moſſy bank, Conſtance was gone. He fixed his mournful eye for a moment on the ſpot ſhe had occupied, but ſoon rage ſucceeded to conſternation. " Yes," ſaid he; " yes, I muſt ſubmit to my fate; my deſtiny muſt be accompliſhed." While he was yet ſpeaking, Thomſon came up to him, bringing a lantern to ſhow him the way. Sainville, trembling with deſpair, followed him in ſilence, and his valet waited for him at the door, which he paſſed with the moſt heartfelt anguiſh. He preſently found at the entrance of the little wood a chaiſe and ſix, and throwing himſelf into the corner, it drove off with the greateſt rapidity.

At ſix in the morning the baron quitting his chamber to join his friend, met Roger, whoſe ſorrowful countenance and dejected air alarmed him. " Is Sainville up?" ſaid the baron. " Up?" ſaid Roger, " he went away laſt night."—" Great God! gone away?"—" Yes, gone away.

I learned it late laſt night after you were gone to bed, but I was ſtrictly enjoined to keep it ſecret."—" Sainville gone away! and who accompanied him? where is he gone?"—" That I know not, but this letter perhaps may inform you."—" Give it me," ſaid the baron. Then haſtening into his chamber, he opened the cover, which contained two letters, one for himſelf, and one for lady Clarendon. The former was to the following effect:

' I am going to leave you, my dear Verceil, and thus purſue the only ſtep that ' can reſtore to my heart the leaſt ſhadow ' of tranquillity. When I quitted Paris, ' I had not yet fixed my plan, but my laſt ' interview has decided my irreſolution. ' I am going in purſuit of new ſcenes, that ' may perhaps calm an agitation of which ' I can no longer endure the violence. My ' abſence will not be very long; you will ' ſee me in leſs than ſix months. This

' plan

'plan has long employed my thoughts, and 'that alone was the cause of the state of 'mind, which you may have observed. I 'flatter myself, this explanation will dispel 'every uneasiness on my account. I have 'concealed my journey from you, because 'I doubted not you would wish to have 'accompanied me, and I am determined 'to fly from every one that is dear to me: 'You would have spoken of an object, 'whose very name I could not hear with-'out relapsing into a dangerous, perhaps, 'a fatal distraction. Ah! never shall 'I be able to banish her from my mind. 'Yet I would at present avoid a subject 'of conversation, which could but renew 'my sorrows and add to their severity. 'Communicate to her, my dear friend, the 'contents of this letter, and deliver the 'inclosed yourself. Permit me, my dear 'Verceil, to conceal from both of you the 'place where my destiny conducts me. I 'repeat to you that I fear the assiduities 'of that ardent friendship, which would

'doubtless endeavour to find me. My 'dear friend, how the times are changed! ''Tis I who now shun the scenes once so 'dear to me. I fly them, I renounce 'every thing—yes every thing. Adieu! 'you will talk of me sometimes. Tell her, 'at least, that so tender an excess of love 'deserved, perhaps, a better fate.

'Address your letters to Monsieur Re-'naud, at Mr. Herbert's, banker, Toulon. 'Adieu, my dear Verceil! alas! once 'more adieu!'

This letter, of which the style was so calm, almost entirely allayed the baron's fears. It seemed to explain all the singularities he had remarked in Sainville's conduct, and though his departure gave him great pain, the reasons he assigned for it appeared so probable, that the more he reflected on them, the more consolatory they appeared. He hastened to discharge with promptitude his friend's commission, and went immediately to lady Clarendon.

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding all the delicacy he employed to prepare her for the news, ſhe was extremely ſhocked when ſhe heard of the departure of Sainville; but the two letters, and the baron's obſervations, ſomewhat calmed her extreme uneaſineſs. All the remainder of the day, however, ſhe was abſorbed in the profoundeſt grief, and alarmed with the moſt horrid preſentiments. The baron ſtayed with her till the evening.

The unfortunate, like the ſick, feel their ills increaſe as the day declines. The calm and ſilent ſerenity of the night forms a ſtriking contraſt to the tumultuous agitation of a heart burſting with contending paſſions. Conſtance felt her woes increaſe as ſoon as the baron had left her. She walked in her garden, holding Sainville's letter in her hand; every word of which was deeply engraved upon her memory. As ſhe bathed it with tears, " Unfortunate friend," ſaid ſhe, " ah! where are you

now?

now? You are, alas! purſuing a journey that every minute bears you to a greater diſtance. You ſigh with deſpair, and I know your ſorrows; but, alas! my ſympathy and my tears are loſt, and cannot reach you. At this ſilent moment, when all nature ſeems buried in ſleep, we alone are wakeful, and that but to ſuffer the cruelleſt of torments. Though animated with the ſame paſſion, 'tis in vain that our ſouls yearn after each other, and are united by ſo ſoft a ſympathy. The ſeparation of death could not be more cruel or more abſolute. If I ceaſed to exiſt, 'tis true, my ſoul could not overflow into your boſom; and have I not voluntarily deprived myſelf of that happineſs? To break the beloved bond formed by the mutual communication of hearts, is to looſen the connection of the body with the ſoul. To love and yet to conceal our paſſion is the dreadful ſilence of the grave. Oh, Sainville! ought I thus to have ſuffered you to go?

You

You had told me enough of your intended plan, for me to have discovered the reft. I ought to have underftood you, and to have retained you here. But is it too late to recall you. Your happinefs—your life, perhaps, depends upon it; ah! were it really thus—there could no longer exift but one duty for me to perform, that of facrificing every thing to you. Yet if I fhould dare to violate the rigid laws of confiftency, and break my vow, though your gratitude might perhaps preferve to me your efteem, yet I muft renounce your admiration for ever, and then how can love exift? Ah! how, when that is deftroyed, can love remain without alteration or diminution?" With this lady Clarendon breathed out a profound figh, at the fame time raifing her eyes, which overflowed with tears, to heaven. The night was calm, and the fky, which was fpangled with ftars, drew the attention of Conftance to its magnificent beauties. That foothing contem-

contemplation, which awakened in her mind ideas of religious veneration, insensibly blended and mingled her thoughts; for when the soul is elevated to sublime meditations it seems to soar above the ordinary language of words, its conceptions are pure images of internal vision, the mind delights in losing itself in the vagueness of indefinite objects, and enjoys a confused sensation of pleasure, that no language can express.

After indulging a long reverie, Constance clasping her hands with impassioned energy, exclaimed: "O, first of Beings! O thou who, notwithstanding my weakness, hast deigned still to preserve my innocence, grant that I may never lose so valuable a blessing. When I formed a rash vow, I dared to rely on my own fortitude; and though in that I deceived myself, my error sprang rather from tender feeling than bold presumption. I have endured all the anguish, sensibility can inflict. Yet I com-

I complain not of my lot, for my life has been pure, and therefore my ſoul may, without diffidence or terror, mount up to thee. Paſſion is but the paſſing ſtorm, and to repel its force, is but to anticipate the effect of time which will ſoon deſtroy it—time that weakens and diminiſhes the deepeſt afflictions, and leaves nothing indelibly impreſſed upon the heart, but the unceaſing anguiſh of remorſe. O guard me from that dreadful torment! If gratitude and love, if ſenſibility and pity ſhould ever vanquiſh my reſolution, if I am too weak to reſiſt the united force of ſo many tender feelings, O let the grave be my aſylum! O let me go down into the tomb before my innocence is ſullied!"

This prayer, which ſhe ſpoke with the moſt affecting fervor, ſpread a delicious calm over the heart of Conſtance. She thought her petition was heard, and began to look forward to futurity with leſs apprehenſion,

henſion, while her piety reſtored her to all the ſerenity of virtue.

When ſhe aroſe on the following morning, ſhe received a letter from Sainville, which ſhe opened with a mixture of joy and uneaſineſs. Its ſtyle was at once rational and impaſſioned, and Conſtance was melted with ſympathetic pleaſure, and ſoothed with the confidence of ſecurity. She ſent for the baron, and ſhewed him Sainville's letter. They paſſed the day together in talking of Sainville, and forming the moſt charming plans for their future lives; and ſeveral following days glided on in ſimilar converſations. Conſtance could no longer bear the abſence of the baron; for ſhe knew how much he loved Sainville; and the pleaſure of talking of him ſuſpended, or at leaſt ſoothed the pains his abſence occaſioned. On the other hand the baron became daily more attached to lady Clarendon, and this new intimacy,

intimacy, with the frequency of their interviews, ſoon diſcovered to him the ſecret ſhe had till then concealed. He too clearly perceived her attachment to Sainville, longer to feel the leaſt doubt; and all her endeavours to perſuade him of the contrary were in vain. But although ſhe could not ſucceed in this, yet the baron was not the leſs convinced that nothing could conquer her ſcruples, and that her reſolution was irrevocably fixed to ſacrifice her paſſion to her duty. However, ſhe exacted from him a promiſe that he would not communicate his ſuſpicions to Sainville; and the baron gave her his word that he would not write a ſingle ſyllable on the ſubject: an engagement which he ſtrictly kept, though he would have been unable to perſevere had he ſeen his friend but for half an hour. After an interval of three months, the baron went to Paris on ſome buſineſs of importance, and having continued there all the autumn, returned to Languedoc in

November.

November. 'Twas now ſix months ſince the departure of Sainville, whoſe letters were always very ſhort, and ſhewed marks of reſtraint; but he ſpoke of his return, and that object ſo entirely engroſſed the attention of his readers, that they did not perceive the peculiarity of his ſtyle. One morning, diſappointed in her expectation of a letter, Conſtance ſent to the caſtle to inquire whether the baron had received any; and a quarter of an hour afterwards, the baron himſelf ſuddenly burſt into the room. Conſtance cried out, "Oh heavens! what is the matter? what do you come to tell me?" The baron threw himſelf into an arm-chair, ſaying, "Sainville will arrive to-morrow, and I am quite in deſpair."—"In deſpair!"—"Yes, Sainville will be here; but the ſtroke of death is in his heart. Here, madam, read this letter." Conſtance wildly ſeized the paper, and hurried her eye over its myſterious contents, which energetically

cally pourtrayed an excefs of diftraction and defpair. "This is not all," continued the baron; "here is another letter from monfieur Renaud. Hear what he writes. I will read it to you.

'Sir,

'Although I write to you without the 'knowledge of the marquis, I cannot an-'fwer all your inquiries. I have promifed 'to preferve the moft inviolable fecrecy 'on moft of the points of which you defire 'to be informed, but you will learn the 'whole from monfieur Sainville himfelf. 'All I can inform you of is the ftate of 'his health, which makes me the more 'uneafy, as he abfolutely refufes advice or 'remedy. Be affured, fir, a confultation 'of the moft fkilful phyficians will be ne-'ceffary. In my opinion I fhould recom-'mend cold-bathing, or even an ice-bath, 'and bleeding in the feet. I perceive he 'has a moft alarming plethora. I do not

'possess the skill of a Boerhaave; but in 'this case the symptoms are such, that a 'school-boy could not mistake them; and 'I assure you they will produce the most 'fatal consequences, if immediate recourse 'is not had to refrigerants and antiphlo- 'gistics. I perceived, even before we 'left Paris, that the marquis had a danger- 'ous fermentation in his blood, and ad- 'vised him to undergo a moderate bleed- 'ing, but he would not listen to it. We 'are now come into a burning climate, 'which to him is particularly dangerous in 'his present state of health, and he has grown 'worse and worse every day. His head too 'seems dreadfully deranged. He believes 'himself, he shall not recover, and talks of 'nothing but dying. I must not conceal, 'sir, that these ideas have affected his 'reason. I am confident that with proper 'treatment he might easily be cured; 'but there is no time to lose.'

"The

"The reſt," ſaid the baron, "conſiſts merely of medical obſervations: but notwithſtanding monſieur Renaud's ignorance of the cauſe of our unfortunate friend's diſorder, it appears that ſeven months abſence have only increaſed his ſufferings, and that ſo much anguiſh and ſo many combats have in fact deſtroyed his health and injured his mind. Read once more his letter to me, and obſerve his obſcure expreſſions, and the diſorder and wildneſs of his ideas. Oh, Conſtance! will you abandon this wretched lover, when you can with a ſingle word——"—"Oh heavens!" cried lady Clarendon, riſing from her ſeat, "is there ſtill time to ſave him?"—"What do you ſay? Will pity at length——"—"Ah! no; 'tis to love I yield." As ſhe pronounced theſe words, ſhe fell back into her chair, and hiding her face in her handkerchief, gave free vent to her tears. The baron threw himſelf at her feet: "Deareſt Conſtance," ſaid he,

"excuſe my tranſport, for no adoration can be more pure. You will now have a lover reſtored to you, and reſtore a friend to me. You will ſave the wretched Sainville from the miſery that deſtroys him. Oh, moſt incomparable of women! You loved—yet, chooſing to become a martyr to your vow, you would never have yielded, had not the voice of compaſſion ſpoken louder than that of love. But why theſe repeated ſobs? Ah! think that though your Sainville is dying, you are reſtoring him to life."—"No," ſaid Conſtance, "I do not repent of the confeſſion I have made, or at leaſt if I cannot ſuppreſs my too juſt remorſe, love ſpeaks ſtill more forcibly in this diſtracted heart. Yes, I will tell him that I love him with an equal ardor; that I will devote my life to him, and ſacrifice to him my liberty, my vows, my honour, every thing, if I can but at any price reſtore him to happineſs."—"Do you ſtill talk of remorſe?" interrupted the

the baron; "ah! let love deſtroy theſe terrific chimeras of an exalted imagination. Will you thus even confound an empty prejudice with the dictates of honour and virtue?"—"Alas!" replied Conſtance, "when opinion converts a prejudice into a virtue, and that virtue is violated, we are certainly highly culpable."—"Ah!" ſaid the baron; "think only of the felicity you will ſoon enjoy. Figure to yourſelf the pleaſure, the joy, the tranſport Sainville will feel, when he hears from the lips of Conſtance, that he is the object of her paſſion; when that hand which is now moiſtened with the tears of friendſhip, ſhall be offered to him by love. Great God! what a change! what a revolution in his deſtiny! To-day the moſt wretched of mankind; to-morrow the moſt happy of human beings. Yes, he is worthy of the prize; for never was attachment to be compared with his. Baniſh then, my dear Conſtance, that gloomy melancholy which

ſtill ſeems to depreſs your heart. Ah! ſhould not the approaching happineſs of your lover alone employ your thoughts." To this lady Clarendon only anſwered by a deep ſigh, and a moſt tender look; and the baron continued: "Sainville will be here to-morrow; his ſervant aſſures me he will arrive before night. He muſt neceſſarily paſs the caſtle in his way hither; why delay his happineſs one minute more than is neceſſary? Come to-morrow morning to the caſtle, and wait his arrival; 'tis the place he will inhabit all his life, and it will become ſtill more dear to him, if he ſhould there receive the confeſſion that is to change his doom, and fix his future lot."—"As you pleaſe," my dear baron," ſaid ſhe, "I conſent to every thing you propoſe."—"Shall I ſet off today to meet him, and carry him a letter from you?"—"No, I will prepare him myſelf by degrees for a change, which exceſs of joy might render fatal to him."—

"The

"The firſt preparation then ſhall be to find you at the caſtle, where you will receive him in his ſtudy. I will meet him at the gate, but I will keep the ſecret, I promiſe you. I will immediately conduct him to you, and then leave you together, while I give the neceſſary orders for the performance of the ceremony which is to accompliſh all the wiſhes of love and friendſhip." At theſe words a ſudden ſuffuſion came over the cheeks of lady Clarendon, who caſt her eyes on the ground with a melancholy air, and claſping her hands with earneſtneſs, "Great God!" ſhe cried, "'Twas at this very ſeaſon of the year, in this very month, five years ago, that I took the ſolemn vow I am now about to violate."—She pauſed; and riſing with a wild air, walked acroſs the room. The baron was ſpeaking with great eagerneſs, but ſhe heard him not. When ſhe was oppoſite to the door of the little room where the picture hung that

reprefented lord Clarendon's tomb fhe ftarted, fuddenly turned round, and burfting into tears, threw herfelf upon a fofa. The baron was all aftonifhment: but his inquiries were in vain, till fhe became by degrees fomewhat calmer, and holding out her hand to him: "Be not uneafy," faid fhe, "I have given my word; I have promifed, and I cannot revoke it. But," continued fhe, in a low voice, "this forrowful heart is quite diftracted. Forgive an agitation, which in time, perhaps, love may pacify, but which I cannot yet fupprefs or conceal." At thefe words taking up the letter again, fhe read it feveral times over, fhedding a torrent of tears. However it revived her refolution, and fufpended the effects of her remorfe. The baron paffed the remainder of the day with her, and did not leave her till midnight, after promifing to conduct her to the caftle, himfelf, at nine o'clock the next morning. No fooner was lady Clarendon alone, and aban-

abandoned to her own reflections, than a crowd of gloomy ideas, which the baron's conversation had dispelled, began to haunt and disorder her imagination. She had risen to enter her chamber and go to bed at the time the baron left her; but when he was gone, she continued rooted to the ground, with a mixture of sadness and of fear, which paralysed all her faculties, and scarcely permitted her to raise her eyes from the earth. At length sinking into a chair, "What a night," said she, "am I about to pass! I feel as it were afraid of my own reproaches. How shall I drive away the cruel reflections that will haunt and persecute my mind? But were I really in an error; were it true that excess of delicacy made me believe *that* a virtue which is mere singularity or caprice, yet this is the opinion of a friend who is a sensible and an enlightened man. It is true I am weak and inconsistent, but should these defects, so common among

my ſex, inſpire me with ſo much horror and ſuch tormenting remorſe?—Great God! if I were but able to overcome them! Death has robbed me of him I loved, time has ſoothed my ſorrows, a new attachment has taken poſſeſſion of my heart, and I yield to it. Such is the hiſtory of my life. However 'tis but that of the common run of women. Ah! I long flattered myſelf I was ſuperior to them—*the common run of women!* But my vanity deceived me. Alas! what avails it that I am not criminal? But no; another woman would have felt her weakneſs, while I, blind to my own defects, entered into a ſolemn engagement with Heaven and with mankind, to be more conſtant and more virtuous than others. Yet this ſolemn vow I am now weakly about to betray. Vain, inſenſate, weak, and guilty, I have thus devoted myſelf to perpetual remorſe, and have merited my unhappy lot. Theſe reflections will one day ſtrike the mind of Sainville—and then,

then, in what light will my conduct appear? What will be my condition, if he should ever view me as I view my own weakneſs?" Sighs and tears, and the ſob of diſtreſs, interrupted theſe reflections; and unable to enjoy repoſe, lady Clarendon determined to devote the night to looking over her papers: for ſhe could not bear the idea of returning in another name to that houſe, whoſe walls were covered with paintings and drawings, commemorative of the ſolemn vow ſhe was now about to violate. "No," ſaid ſhe, "never will I return to this peaceful cottage, which my preſence would profane. Thomſon ſhall take care of it; there he ſhall live free and independent in peace and tranquillity, thoſe ineſtimable bleſſings which to me are irrecoverably loſt."

The peruſal of her papers become a new ſubject of grief; ſhe read many letters from lord Selden, and the phyſician mentioned before, who reſided in London. They

breathed the moft enthufiaftic admiration of her conduct, and exalting with the higheft eulogies the facrifice fhe made in honour of her hufband, told her many poets had celebrated this noble action; that it was engraved upon the tomb, and that this affecting monument of *fublime fidelity* would for ever be an object of curiofity and admiration to all foreigners. She alfo met with many engravings fent to her from London by various artifts, reprefenting her in different attitudes weeping over the tomb of lord Clarendon. "Great God!" cried fhe, "on what a miferable object are all thefe panegyrics lavifhed!—At this very moment all thefe prints are expofed in the fhops of London—my friends are now pronouncing eulogies on my conduct, and boafting my unparalleled fidelity—two days hence, perhaps at the very moment when travellers are flocking to the tomb, and reading with tendernefs and compaffion that fatal vow—I fhall

I ſhall be abjuring the ſacred engagement it bears, at the foot of the altar!—that altar will doubtleſs ſink beneath my profane ſtep, and God will reject my perjured promiſes.—Can I hope he will ever bleſs this criminal union?—he forbids it—he reprobates it.—What will my friends think of my conduct?—what will my enemies ſay when they ſhall know it?—and can I ſuffer that inſcription to remain when it will be ignominious and ridiculous?—yet how can I ſummon the boldneſs to order its removal?—but what avails it when my ſhame is indelible?—thus then firſt my preſumption and now my weakneſs have reduced me to the loweſt degree of abaſement."—The unfortunate Conſtance paſſed the greater part of the night in this violent conflict of anxiety and remorſe; at length feeling her ſtrength exhauſted, and the clock ſtriking ſix, ſhe reſolved to lay down on the bed. As ſhe undreſſed, the portrait of lord Clarendon, which ſhe

always

always wore in her boſom, ſuddenly ſtruck her eyes. She ſhuddered at the ſight, and then falling on her knees took it off and laid it on the table. "Dear, dreadful image," ſaid ſhe, "I am no longer worthy to bear thee. I could not ſeparate myſelf from thee, but by putting off the robe of innocence, and I part with thee, as virtue is renounced, with terror and deſpair." When ſhe had uttered theſe words ſhe aroſe, and with trembling ſtep dragged herſelf with difficulty to her bed and lay down. But in vain did ſhe ſeek repoſe, for ſleep was to her no longer a ſalutary balm. She found neither oblivion for her errors nor relief for her ſorrows. Horrid dreams and dreadful remembrances affrighted her with the phantoms of illuſion, and added to the inſupportable burden of her remorſe. Oh fatal effect of a diſordered conſcience!—Is it the virtuous, the innocent lady Clarendon who thus wildly ſtarts on yon bed of grief? whoſe coun-

tenance

tenance wears the paleneſs of death, and whoſe brow, where ſweet ſerenity uſed to ſit, now preſents the gloomy image of terror and deſpair?—She fancies herſelf ſtretched upon the tomb of her lord—ſhe hears the hollow groans of lord Elby reproach her with his death—ſhe beholds the angry ſhade of her departed huſband beckon her, ſeize her, drag her away—ſhe beholds Sainville in deſpair ready to follow her to the bottom of the abyſs that yawns beneath their feet—ſhe ſtrives to puſh him back; her whole frame is agitated; ſhe ſtruggles, ſtarts, and wakes. Trembling, palpitating, and ſhuddering ſhe raiſes herſelf to caſt around her the wild gaze of terror:—"Whither ſhall I fly, who ſhall deliver me from theſe gloomy phantoms, and from the horror that purſues me.—Alas! they are in my own heart; how ſhall I ſhake them off?"—As ſhe ſpoke theſe words ſhe quitted her bed, but ſo feeble and fatigued that ſhe had

had ſcarcely ſtrength to dreſs herſelf. Half an hour after Thomſon came to announce the arrival of the baron. Conſtance wiped away her tears, and giving Thomſon a box, with orders to place it in the carriage, "My faithful friend," ſaid ſhe to him, "here are all my keys—this opens the little room where I ſo frequently retired—henceforward I muſt no more enter it—you will come back to night, and reſpectfully draw the veil over the picture—and every morning, in that ſacred ſpot which I appropriated to devout exerciſes, you will pray to heaven for your unfortunate miſtreſs."—"What," interrupted Thomſon, "is my lady going away, and without poor Thomſon?"—"No, my good friend, I ſhall ſtill remain in this neighbourhood, but this houſe is yours; live here in liberty and peace."—"No, my lady, I will ſerve you as long as I have breath."—"Very well, Thomſon, you will come and ſee me

every

every day—but I repeat, that this farm and all it contains are now your property." With theſe words, and without waiting for the reply of Thomſon, whoſe ſurpriſe and aſtoniſhment rooted him to the ground, Conſtance left the room and joined the baron. He drew back with aſtoniſhment when he beheld her. "Heavens!" ſaid he, "in what a condition are you!—what a dreadful change!"—"I have ſlept very ill," replied ſhe, "but I am pretty well this morning."—"But you can ſcarcely walk."—"For God's ſake let us talk no more of myſelf," ſaid ſhe, "I beſeech you do not let Sainville know the melancholy converſation we had yeſterday—his happineſs ſhall henceforward be my only care; let us conceal from him every thing that might diminiſh it—beſides I think as you do; and though I condemn myſelf, time will do the reſt."—"Come, dear Conſtance," reſumed the baron, "take your leave of this obſcure

ſcure retreat for ever: 'tis ill adapted to your charms. I have already ſent Georgina to the caſtle; come and let friendſhip lead you to the happy ſpot where you will this night receive your huſband." So ſaying the baron ſeized her trembling hand, and led her, with an air of triumph, to the carriage, where Conſtance took a melancholy farewel of the cottage, and unable to conceal the agitation of her ſoul hid her face in her handkerchief, and ſhed a torrent of tears. The baron ſighed in ſilence, till at length Conſtance made an effort to calm and diſpel the uneaſineſs of her friend, by a falſe appearance of tranquillity. When they arrived at the caſtle he led her to Sainville's apartments, where the firſt object that ſtruck her view was the portrait of her lover. She ſtarted at the ſight, and ſitting oppoſite the picture, fixed her eyes on the beloved image, and abandoned herſelf to the pleaſure of contemplating

plating it. 'Twas then no longer grief and remorse that reigned in her bosom. Love resumed his power, drove away despair, and obliterated the cruel traits of repentance. The impression she now received was visible in her countenance, to which it restored her natural beauty. Her gloomy ideas were softened, her paleness disappeared, and an affecting expression of pleasure gave life and animation to those charming features so lately disordered by heart-rending anguish. The baron, who was seated beside her, contemplated her in silence, and beheld her with transport. But Roger soon came to awaken them from the reverie in which they were respectively lost. The baron, whose joy had rendered him more communicative than ever, could not help talking with Roger that morning, and the good man charmed with the event he had discovered to be about to take place, could not remain a moment inactive. He had gone

gone all over the caſtle, accompanied by Thomſon, who did not know a word of French, winking and ſmiling at him from time to time with archneſs, and had been cleaning and ſetting the apartments in order, given a dozen different orders in a quarter of an hour, ſcolding the ſervants, calling aloud, throwing himſelf in a paſſion, and had been inceſſantly in a ſtate of exertion ſince eight o'clock in the morning. His aſſiduity at length brought him to the room where Conſtance was ſitting. Thomſon brought five or ſix pots of flowers. Roger made a ſign to place them on the tables while he brought a large noſegay of orange flowers, and advancing towards lady Clarendon, preſented it to her in the moſt reſpectful and ſmiling manner, and then looking at her archly, "My lady will obſerve," ſaid he, "this noſegay is all white—as is the cuſtom here—on ſuch a day as this."—Roger would not have left off if the baron, who felt

felt embarraſſed at his indiſcretion, had not made a ſign to him to keep ſilence.— But after a momentary interval, deſirous to renew the converſation, "Sir," ſaid Roger to the baron, "I have obeyed your orders. The fiddlers with all the lads and laſſes of the village are already poſted at the entrance of the avenue through which the marquis is to come. I' faith he will have a very pretty coup-d'œil there. They are all dreſſed alike, and I have given each of them a riband as if it were a wedding— I know what I know, thank God—but never fear, they know nothing about it— I am not proud; but I ſhall not go and talk with a parcel of peaſants about theſe affairs. All I ſaid was, Dance and ſing, my dears, and eſcort the marquis into the courtyard. You will never be at a finer fête, I aſſure you. Rejoice and make merry upon the faith of my promiſe. To-morrow you will ſee whether Roger is a fool.—Poor people, I made them all happy. I' faith every

body

body ought to be happy ſuch a day as this." Here Roger at laſt ceaſed. In vain did the baron make ſigns to him, and give him the moſt frowning looks, nothing could ſtop the impetuoſity of his tongue. When he had done the baron looked at his watch, and finding it was near two o'clock, inquired if the dinner was ready, and propoſed to Conſtance to go into the dining-room. She aroſe, and with a dejected air placed herſelf at table. Their dinner was dull and melancholy; for lady Clarendon, who felt an inſuperable depreſſion of mind, could neither anſwer nor attend to what the baron ſaid, and neither his attentions nor his converſation could awaken her from her profound reverie. When dinner was over, he reconducted her into Sainville's apartment, and after a ſhort interval of ſilence; "Really," ſaid he, "you make me miſerable: you promiſed me to be reaſonable, and you have deceived me."—"No," replied ſhe,

"I have paſſed a bad night. I am fatigued and am unwell."—" Perhaps you have a little fever."—" That is poſſible, for my head feels heavy, and I have a ſhivering."—Great God! ſhould you be taken ill."—" Oh, I ſhall be better preſently."—" You muſt indeed, if Sainville's life is of any value to you."—" If it is of value to me!" repeated ſhe, raiſing her eyes to heaven; " ah! do I not prove it is?—I have but one virtue now to claim, that of loving as no woman ever loved before; but you will not leave me, my dear baron," continued ſhe; " for your advice will often be uſeful and neceſſary to me. You will daily repeat to Sainville, that I could not ſurvive the loſs of his affections; in ſhort, you will aſſiſt me to preſerve his love, without which I ſhould be robbed of every conſolation."—" I can never be uſeful to you," replied the baron; " but I ſhall enjoy and participate your happineſs; it will conſtitute mine,

and

and henceforward I am infenfible to every pain but thofe that afflict you." With thefe words the baron paufed, for he was deeply affected, and lady Clarendon whofe eyes were overflowing with tears, preffed his hand with an expreffion of the fincereft gratitude, when on a fudden they heard the found of ruftic mufic. They both ftarted, and at the fame moment came Roger quite out of breath, and crying out, "There is the joyous band that leads the way before the marquis."—"Oh heavens!" faid Conftance, "he is then arrived!"—"Yes, madam; he is already in the avenue."—"Very well, Roger," faid the baron; "you may go. Good God!" continued he, looking at Conftance, "you are going to be unwell."—"No," faid fhe; "the effect of joy will not be very fatal; run, my dear friend, to meet him."—"Adieu! I will conduct him to you; but before I introduce him, permit me to prepare him for feeing you here; of the

reſt I will not ſay a word." Having ſaid this, the baron, ſcarcely able to contain himſelf, ran out with precipitation. He hurried down the ſtairs, and when he entered the court-yard, the firſt object that met his eyes, was Sainville himſelf, wrapped up in a large travelling cloak, getting out of the carriage. The baron darted forward to receive him in his arms, and Sainville embraced him with a gloomy air, ſaying, "I have ſomething to communicate to you immediately——"—"But," interrupted the baron, "I have alſo a great deal to tell you. But come this way." At the ſame time he conducted him into a ſmall room adjoining that where l.dy Clarendon was; then embracing him once more, "In what a ſtate you are come back!" ſaid he; "how thin you are; and how dejected you appear! How cruel it was thus to ſuffer in ſolitude, and without permitting me to participate your afflictions! but prepare yourſelf for a change, a happy change."—"What

do you mean?"—"Conſtance is here." —"Oh heavens! I cannot bear to ſee her at preſent; hear firſt, I beſeech you, what I have to ſay. Know that——" —"No; it is Conſtance you muſt hear— once more, my dear friend, you are near the end of all your troubles."—"Great God! what does all this mean? Speak! what mad hope are you indulging in my favour?"—"No; 'tis well founded— come in, Conſtance; come and reſtore your happy lover to life and joy." So ſaying, the baron ran away, a door immediately opened, and lady Clarendon with a timid and trembling ſtep, and her face bathed in tears, advanced towards Sainville, who was rooted to the ground with wonder and amazement. As ſhe approached, ſhe held out her hand: "Yes," ſaid ſhe, "your ſorrows and mine are now finiſhed, if your happineſs ſtill depends on me."—"Great God! what do I hear! You love me; you can ſacrifice to me all your ſcruples?"—"Yes; 'tis all

all over. Love—all powerful love has at length overcome my fears and objections, or rather has annihilated them. Dispose then of my future destiny, that, for ever united with yours—you look pale, and sorrow seems to have taken possession of your countenance. Oh heavens! what is the matter?"—"Where am I?" cried Sainville: "fly me, abandon a wretch who knows not what he does."—"Great God! what wildness! what a strange alteration! Ah, Sainville! recal your scattered senses; recal your reason."—"Oh, why is it not taken entirely from me."—"Recollect yourself; 'tis Constance—Constance who gives herself to you."—"Cruel woman!" replied Sainville, with his teeth half closed, "into what a horrid abyss have you not led me, step by step. But no; you deceive me. 'Tis not love, but compassion, that has formed your resolution."—"You destroy me," said Constance; "ah, Sainville! when thus for

you I facrifice my duty and my reputation, can you miftake the irrefiftible paffion that drags me on."—"At length," faid Sainville, "the cup is full—learn all the horror of my fate: not content with robbing me of every hope, you even doubted my fidelity, and calumniated my future inclinations. Ah! know that a dreadful, an irrevocable vow has now robbed me of my liberty; I have been to Malta, and this crofs," faid he, throwing off his cloak, "will tell you all that remains to be told."

Some feelings there are which cannot be defcribed, becaufe they are as rapid as thought itfelf, and compofed of an infinity of contrary emotions. Conftance at once felt pleafure at receiving from the man fhe adored a proof of the moft tender paffion, and grief for a facrifice which for ever deprived her lover of the leaft hope of happinefs. Yet, notwithftanding the heart-rending regrets excited by a mixture of love and gratitude, fhe felt at the

fame

ſame time a kind of joy at finding herſelf releaſed from the neceſſity of violating her own vow. She ſeemed to behold a bottomleſs abyſs cloſe before her feet, and agitated by ſo many various emotions, ſhe at once ſhuddered at her doom, and bleſſed Providence for his mercy. She ſank into a chair, unable to articulate a word; while Sainville at firſt ſilently contemplated her, then raiſing his eyes to heaven, "At length," ſaid he with firmneſs, "no motive will henceforward oblige me to live!"—"Great God!" cried Conſtance, "what dreadful language!"—"What!" reſumed Sainville with impetuoſity, "ſhall I have the baſeneſs to live, after having heard that ſentence: *Conſtance gives herſelf to you?*—Cruel woman! you knew; yes, you muſt have gueſſed that inſenſate ſacrifice which has for ever placed between us, not the imaginary obſtacle of an empty ſcruple, but an inſurmountable barrier—and 'tis after having forced me to this

 deſperate

desperate resolution that you now offer me your hand—and you think I can bear to live." To this Constance, who was greatly alarmed, would willingly have replied; but she was unable to speak, and the words died away upon her lips. She threw herself upon her knees, and stretched out her hands to Sainville; but he beheld her with sternness, and said, in a cold and ill-boding voice, "No; you have decided it; you have led me step by step to the utmost bounds of misery and despair. I reproach you not; but life is become odious to me, and you have now given me a right to renounce it." With this he was going to leave her:— "Stay," cried Constance in wild disorder; "oh stay!" and her terror restoring her strength, she arose, sprang forwards to Sainville, and fell into his arms. Sainville, notwithstanding his rage and fury, could not help pressing her with emotion to his bosom: "Oh day," cried he, "of illusion

illusion, of intoxication, and of grief. Constance has said—*I give myself to you.* Constance is in my arms. Oh Constance, how can I bear such a remembrance?"—As he spoke these words a torrent of tears deluged his cheeks, and restored some confidence to lady Clarendon. She sat down, and Sainville threw himself at her feet. "Yes," said she; "yes, I am indeed the sole cause of both our misery; but I love you, and to you I will devote my life."—"What do I hear! Oh heavens! do not deceive me."—"No; after all my fatal imprudence; after the proofs of tenderness you have given me, my first duty will in future be to rescue you by my affection and my attentions from the horror of that despair of which I am the fatal cause. I will never leave you; I will follow you throughout the world, and blindly repose myself on the honour of the man I love. Oh, Sainville, had a solemn tie united us you would have beheld your unfortunate friend

friend ſink under the weight of ſelf accuſation and remorſe. The dreadful cry of conſcience would not have been ſilenced even by you, though I could have bid defiance to public opinion, and placed all my glory in your eſteem alone." This tender language called up an emotion of gratitude in the heart of Sainville which overcame his gloomy deſpair, and he replied in the moſt impaſſioned terms, ſuch feelings could inſpire. At this moment the baron ſuddenly appeared, burſting into tears. He had learned the event from monſieur Renaud, and he ran up to his friend, crying out, " Ah, unfortunate man! what have you done?" Theſe few words revived all Sainville's grief; but he endeavoured to conceal it; and Conſtance reſuming the diſcourſe, under pretext of informing the baron, warmly eulogiſed the fortitude of the unfortunate Sainville: but the converſation was entirely confined to Conſtance and the baron, Sainville only uttering

tering now and then a few detached fyllables, interrupted by the deepeft fighs. The baron endeavoured to afford thefe two unfortunate lovers all the confolation of which they were capable, but he foon became the only fpeaker. Lady Clarendon was too abfent and too faint to reply, and Sainville was too much loft in his mournful reverie, even to hear what he faid. The baron, therefore, at length was filent, and thus they all remained near an hour in fpeechlefs agony. Night had now clofed in, and Roger came in with lights, when Sainville turning to lady Clarendon, was ftruck with affright at the appearance of defpair and anguifh impreffed on all her features. He feized her hand, but found it in a burning heat. "Oh heavens!" cried he, "you are in a fever."—"Indeed," replied fhe, "I have occafion for reft."—"Ah, Conftance!"—"Be not uneafy," faid fhe; "love me; remember your laft promifes, and my health will foon return."

turn." Sainville made no anſwer, but preſſed her hand to his boſom; then riſing up: "This is your home," ſaid he; "ah, Conſtance! you have promiſed you will leave me no more; this apartment ſhall be yours, and I in future will occupy the floor where the baron is at preſent. We will leave you to go to bed, and be aſſured, my dear Conſtance, that my whole life ſhall be inſeparably attached to yours." With theſe words he went out with the baron, and inſtantly gave orders to ſend to Limoux for a phyſician. After ſeeing the meſſenger ſet off, he went into another apartment with the baron, where ſeating himſelf by a table, he ſupported his head on his arm, and after a momentary ſilence, looking ſtedfaſtly at the baron, "What do you think," ſaid he, "of her ſtate of health?"—"She has received a violent ſhock," ſaid the baron; "ſhe has experienced ſince yeſterday ſo many revolutions!"—"She will ſurely ſink under

them,"

them," replied Sainville, "and that is the laſt blow, fate can give me."—"Oh, drive away that horrid idea, which, thank Heaven! is not in the ſmalleſt degree probable."—"No, no; my miſerable deſtiny will not change its character. During theſe two laſt years I have not framed a project, or executed one reſolution that has not proved fatal to me: Led on ſtep by ſtep from misfortune to misfortune, can I hope to eſcape the ſevereſt of all—that which alone remains for me to fear? She will die, I tell you; yes, I ſhall behold her breathe her laſt in my arms; I ſhall behold thoſe eyes cloſed for ever, and I the ſole cauſe of her death, I her murderer cannot diſpoſe of the life I abhor, till I have received her laſt ſigh. Poor unfortunate Conſtance! ſhe accuſes herſelf of my misfortunes; yet had ſhe not known me, ſhe would ſtill have enjoyed in peace and happineſs all the charms of that innocence ſo peculiarly her own, and her life

would have glided on in uninterrupted tranquillity. Tell me, my dear Verceil, what real good attends on virtue? Can ſhe exterminate the paſſions? Can ſhe repay the ſacrifices ſhe requires? I know not why it is, but never was I leſs diſpoſed to receive the conſolations ſhe offers. All my principles ſeem confounded and put to flight. Thoſe ſacred words *Virtue* and *Providence* now preſent but vague ideas to my mind, without making the leaſt impreſſion on my heart. An internal rage, a dreadful paroxyſm of deſpair, has taken poſſeſſion of my ſoul; I can no longer reflect; I am in pain; I am dying; and I can think of nothing but accuſing my deſtiny, and complaining of my fate."— "*You cannot reflect!*" ſaid the baron. "Ah! my dear friend; be aſſured we always poſſeſs that invaluable faculty which is given to preſerve us from being miſled by our paſſions. You are fearful of finding yourſelf too weak or too culpable.

You

You repel every reflection that would enlighten you regarding your errors, and to abandon yourfelf to a criminal defpair you would willingly deny the very exiftence of Virtue, becaufe fhe would condemn you. But can you expect, that by renouncing her laws you can annihilate her duties and obligations?"—"*Virtue!*" repeated Sainville; "ah! I was born to believe in and to love her. Ah! have I not adored her moft perfect image? but when I caft my eyes over the furface of the earth, I am led to think fhe is but a brilliant chimera, a mere phantom of the imagination. The true proof of her exiftence would be her utility. Yet we even behold her votaries perfecuted by misfortune and wretchednefs."—"Alas! my dear friend," replied the baron, "look but at Conftance. She has an elevated mind, and is no doubt to be pitied for her misfortunes; but it is not her *virtue* that has been the caufe of her afflictions. On the contrary they are

the consequence of her imprudences and of a weakness which *her virtue* condemns. Believe me, those in whom strong passions prevail, have less right to complain of Providence than others; for they alone are the authors of their own destiny. Heaven has given them the glorious privilege of being sole arbiters of their fate, and their condition depends but on their own appetites and passions."—"This internal energy then is surely a fatal present from the Deity to man, since it requires all the force of reason to moderate its excess."—"No; the energy that produces strong passions, gives us also the strength requisite to oppose and conquer them."—"Conquer them! and what happiness can we enjoy after so sad a victory, if we have once tasted the delight of loving without controul?"—"Let Constance tell you. Remember her history and you will perceive that virtue and religion can close and heal the deepest wounds of the human heart, and procure

it

it a happinefs infinitely preferable to that which the paffions can confer. A paffion deftroyed leaves, it is true, a great void in a mind of ordinary magnitude, but not in a foul of true fenfibility. Such a mind feels the want of an object of adoration and idolatry. It does not look upon virtue as a refource; 'tis not a calculation of advantage that leads it to become her votary. It is ftruck with her elevation and fplendor, without confidering her utility. It embraces her with tranfport, and attaches itfelf to her laws in obedience to the impulfe of that noble enthufiafm which alone is permanent, becaufe time and reflection, inftead of cooling it, can but augment its force." To this difcourfe Sainville made no reply, but fighing deeply, and rifing with agitation, ftrided up and down the room; then fuddenly ftopping, exclaimed: "She loved me—yet by a fatality that attends on me alone, the knowledge of her paffion is the completion of my mifery.—She

loved

loved me! Conſtance returned my love! When I reflect on the happineſs of which my fatal imprudence has robbed me for ever, my heart ſeems to burſt aſunder, my reaſon grows wild, and I abhor my very exiſtence. My rage burſts out even againſt Conſtance herſelf. I was ſo perfectly convinced that nothing could ever overcome her ſcruples—and yet, when I pronounced the deteſted vow, a horrid preſentiment chilled my very ſoul. She loved me:—Great God!—I think I ſtill behold her offering me her hand. Yes, all I ſuffered in England or at Malta—great God! at Malta, where the furies drove me to complete the ſacrifice of my liberty, all the anguiſh I have felt, is nothing when compared with that dreadful moment ever preſent to my mind, when I beheld Conſtance advancing towards me, and declaring to me her paſſion. How could I hear her pronounce thoſe words, 'I give myſelf to you,' without falling dead upon the ſpot?

Thunder

Thunder is not more ſudden or more terrible in its effects: an indeſcribable emotion of anger, reſentment, and deſpair, at once annihilates in my heart thoſe of gratitude, of compaſſion, and of humanity—it would have led me to immolate to my fury the moſt innocent, the moſt amiable of women, and thus terminate ſo many horrors by both our deaths."—"But, my dear friend," replied the baron, "when you returned from England, you wrote me that you yourſelf were convinced that Conſtance could not again take the matrimonial vow, and even that you ceaſed to wiſh it."—"I thought ſo then, becauſe I was fully convinced nothing could prevail with her—but ſhe *has* conſented, and to-morrow I ſhould have received her hand if——"—"Love itſelf could not have triumphed over her remorſe."—"Yet he annulled her reſolution."—"That is true; but her deſpair was indeſcribable, and be aſſured, you would both

have

have been equally miferable." As the baron was faying thefe words, Roger came in, and with affrighted air told Sainville the fever of Conftance feemed much increafed, and that the woman who was ordered to attend her, had juft told him fhe began to ramble. Sainvillé fixed his eyes on Roger, and feemed rooted to the ground; then without uttering a word he hurried out, and the baron, almoft equally alarmed, followed him. They found Conftance in bed. On hearing Sainville's voice, fhe opened the curtains, and would have fpoken, but fhe had fuch an oppreffion on her cheft, that fhe could fcarcely pronounce a few words without connection. Sainville threw himfelf on his knees by her bed-fide, and with trembling voice inquired how fhe felt. She only anfwered by giving him her hand, and having looked at him for a fhort time, fhe clofed her eyes, and turned on the other fide. Sainville then arofe, and finking into a chair, remained

remained half an hour without uttering a ſyllable, in a ſtate of depreſſion bordering on ſtupidity. At length he accidentally caſt his eyes towards the baron, and perceived him weeping. At this ſight he ſtarted up, went up to him, and taking him into another room, "Great God!" ſaid he, "you think then that ſhe is paſt recovery? Speak; tell me what you think of her, and complete the diſtraction of my heart." "She gives me ſome uneaſineſs, I confeſs," ſaid the baron, "and I wait with impatience for the arrival of the phyſician."—"But," replied Sainville, "ſhe knows us, and has all her recollection; looks well, and her hand was not very hot. Whence then do you judge that ſhe is ſo ill?" The baron, perceiving that his unfortunate friend had not the courage to look the dreadful event in the face, which he had himſelf predicted an hour before, determined to conceal his ſerious alarm: and to affect a tranquillity he was far from feeling; and

and Sainville, who wiſhed to deceive himſelf, ſeemed to believe it real: but his tears trickled down without his knowledge, and the baron could not without the greateſt exertion avoid mingling his own, with them. In the mean while, Sainville returned to lady Clarendon's room, and the baron went to order Roger privately to inform him when the phyſician arrived. An hour after, Roger came in and gave the ſignal agreed upon, when the baron went to meet the phyſician, who was the very perſon under whoſe care lady Clarendon had already been in an illneſs on her arrival at Limoux. The baron informed him of the ſituation of Conſtance, and charged him, in caſe ſhe was dangerouſly ill, to communicate his fears to no one except himſelf. Having taken theſe precautions, he returned to his friend; and a few minutes after, Roger came to announce the arrival of the doctor. Sainville turned pale when he ſaw him, and ſhuddered

ſhuddered at the idea of the ſentence he was about to pronounce. His preſentiment was but two well founded. The phyſician approached the bedſide, and while he was examining the ſituation of Conſtance, Sainville, ſcarcely able to ſupport himſelf, ſtretching his head forwards with his mouth half open, kept his eyes fixed upon the phyſician, and haſtened to communicate to him every thing that could oppoſe the idea that ſhe was in great danger. When the doctor had ſatisfied himſelf with his inquiries, Sainville and his friend conducted him into another room, and queſtioned him in their turn. He replied in conformity to the inſtructions he had received. He ſaid, "the fever was not yet ſufficiently advanced to pronounce a definitive judgment—that ſhe ſeemed very ill, but that he did not yet perceive any real danger. After this explanation, which, notwithſtanding the cautious terms in which it was couched, excited in Sainville's mind the

the moſt cruel alarms, they returned to the bed-room. The baron dared not immediately to ſpeak privately to the phyſician, for fear of exiting ſome ſuſpicions in his friend; and beſides, he felt too great a dread of the reſult, to ſeek an opportunity with eagerneſs.

In the mean while lady Clarendon, who was in a lethargic ſtate, perceived not what was paſſing in the room. Sainville and the baron ſat up all night in her chamber. At five in the morning ſhe ſeemed to rouſe herſelf, and her recollection began to return. Sainville ſitting ſo that ſhe could not ſee him, ſhe raiſed herſelf up, put the curtain aſide and looked round the room; then perceiving his portrait, which hung oppoſite the bed, ſhe contemplated it with an air of aſtoniſhment, and turning on that ſide kept her eyes fixed upon it for ſome time. Sainville watched all her motions, and beckoned the phyſician to come to her. He felt her pulſe, and aſked her

her some questions. “ My head,” said she, “ is a little confused ; I have been asleep a very long time. Where is monsieur de Sainville ?”—“ He is lying down.”—“ He went to bed late, I am certain ?”—“ No, madam ; for there is no cause for the least alarm.”—“ Do you think so ?”—“ Most assuredly.”—“ Well, you must tell monsieur de Sainville so.”—“ He knows it ; he is quite easy.”—“ Ah, then I am also.”— This conversation had such an effect on Sainville, that fearing he should discover himself, he silently rose and left the room. The baron, thinking lady Clarendon was better, took this opportunity to speak to the doctor, who in the same intention advanced towards him. They went to the other end of the room, and stood in the window. “ Well,” said the baron, “ she is better ?”—“ Ah, Sir,” replied the physician, shaking his head, “ do not flatter yourself.”—“ Great God ! then you think her in much danger ?”—“ In the

greatest

greateſt danger."—"But are you entirely without hopes?"—"Not entirely, but my hopes are very faint."—On hearing this dreadful doom the baron's head ſank upon his boſom, and he was ſtruck motionleſs with conſternation and grief. At this time a meſſage came, that Sainville wiſhed to ſpeak to him. He raiſed his eyes to heaven, and with the moſt painful effort to compoſe his countenance, joined his friend. Sainville no ſooner perceived him, than he ran up to him with open arms, "Come, my dear friend," ſaid he, "come and participate my joy! She is ſaved; her ſenſes are returned; ſhe has recovered her intellect, her ſenſibility. Ah! to her this is to recover life itſelf?—I concealed from you the dreadful uneaſineſs I ſuffered; yes, I was diſtracted by the moſt horrid fears. I thought her in danger,—but ſhe is now viſibly better—no more drowſineſs—her head cool—her natural tone of voice—the phyſician too ſeemed ſatisfied.

What did he ſay to you?"—"Nothing, he did not come near me."—"That ſhows he felt no uneaſineſs, for he would not conceal it from us."—"Did you hear, my dear friend, all ſhe ſaid to him?"—"Yes, I was much affected with it."—"Judge then what muſt be my feelings! Am I then loved by her to ſuch exceſs, and yet could complain of my deſtiny?—Nothing ſhall ever ſeparate us. I ſhall ever have her with me. I ſhall be certain of her affections for ever. Well, my dear Verceil, this illneſs will have its benefits. Before theſe fears for her life were excited, I was ſo inſenſate, ſo ungrateful as to hate my own. But now I know all the value of the treaſure that ſhould bind me to it. Ah! may heaven preſerve it long, for I feel, at laſt, that I am capable of ſtill becoming happy."

While Sainville was ſpeaking, the baron leaned againſt the chimney, and hid part of his face with his hand. He felt his

ſtrength deſerting him, and a violent palpitation, a dreadful internal agitation, made him fear each moment that he ſhould betray himſelf, or be taken ill. Had Sainville been leſs prepoſſeſſed, leſs tranſported with joy, he muſt have obſerved the diſorder and embarraſſment of the baron; but without waiting for a reply, he returned to lady Clarendon's room, and for a few moments relieved the baron from the reſtraint he felt in Sainville's preſence.

Lady Clarendon had in fact recovered all her ſenſes, and was employed throughout the day in confirming Sainville's eaſe of mind, in which ſhe perfectly ſucceeded. She took from time to time a few drops of an elixir that raiſed her ſpirits and gave her ſtrength; and ſhe ſeemed ſo eaſy and ſo well that even the baron could not help conceiving hopes. At midnight ſhe intreated Sainville and his friend to go to bed, and exacted a promiſe that they would

would remain there at leaſt ſix hours. Sainville, whoſe mind was perfectly eaſy, obeyed; but the baron having again queſtioned the phyſician, received ſo fatal and ſo poſitive a prediction, that he ſhut himſelf up in his room, ſolely that he might, without control, give vent to his deep anguiſh and affliction. He did not quit it till three in the morning; and fearing to diſturb Conſtance if he entered her apartment, he went into an adjoining room, where he found the phyſician lying on a ſofa. He was not aſleep; and ſaid to the baron, "You ſee me here, ſir, becauſe ſhe ſent me away immediately after you left her."—"And why ſo?"—"She had ſent for a clergyman, who has been with her ever ſince. After having diſcharged his duty as an eccleſiaſtic, ſhe requeſted him to write her will from her dictation."—"Good God! then ſhe knows her danger?"—"Perfectly well. But be not uneaſy at this circumſtance, for ſhe ſeems

ſupported by an almoſt ſupernatural power; or rather, her pure, her celeſtial ſoul diſengages itſelf without a ſtruggle from its earthly bonds, and ſeeks with joy its native home."—"Oh!" ſaid the baron, "at leaſt allow me to weep for thoſe ſhe leaves!"—His ſobs ſtifled his voice, and he fell upon the ſofa and ſhed a deluge of tears.

While this faithful friend abandoned himſelf to the moſt violent affliction, Conſtance, with perfect tranquillity, was dictating the laſt wiſhes of her heart. In this affecting paper nothing was forgot. It contained an affectionate remembrance of her friends in London, and of the baron. She ſettled Thomſon in the farm, and provided for the little Georgina, whom ſhe recommended to the care of Sainville, in the aſſurance that in him ſhe would find a father and a protector: and ſhe concluded by two pages of writing directly addreſſed to Sainville himſelf, in which ſhe conjured him,

him, by the unfortunate attachment they had formed, ſtill to live; and pointed out the plan of life he ought to purſue. She preſcribed to him to ſpend three years in travelling; and ſhe poſitively inſiſted that he ſhould quit Languedoc without delay, and not return there till two years after he had completed his travels. When this paper was finiſhed, ſhe ſigned it; but ſhe wrote only her chriſtian name *Conſtance*. She added to it a miniature portrait of herſelf, and the whole was made up into a packet, which ſhe ſealed, and then laid under her pillow. She now learned that the baron was in the next room, and concluding the phyſician had informed him of her approaching diſſolution, ſhe aſked to ſee him. The clergyman who had paſſed the night by her bed ſide, carried the meſſage, and took the opportunity to exhort him to moderate the exceſs of his grief. "Come," ſaid he, "come and admire her heroic courage; but ſhake

it not. Respect the angelic serenity of a soul exalted by religion, and do not weaken it by a too dangerous sensibility." The baron, unable to reply, followed the clergyman in silence. As soon as Constance perceived him, she held out her hand: "I deceived you last night," said she, "but I was desirous you should take some rest. Is your friend still in bed?"—"Yes, his mind was perfectly easy."—"He will have slept then—for when this night is past he will long be deprived of repose."—"You make me miserable," said the baron, "but hope still remains, and the physician himself——"—"Let us no longer deceive ourselves," said lady Clarendon; "let us improve the precious time which the goodness of Providence still allows." She then informed him in few words of her last wishes, adding several particulars relative to Sainville, and then looking at him with tenderness: "Of my regard to you, my dear friend," said she, "I say

"I ſay nothing, but you are henceforward the only friend of Sainville, you are his only reſource. Judge, therefore, how dear you muſt be to me."—"Oh, Conſtance," replied the baron, "I ſhall be able to juſtify the confidence with which you have honoured me. I am more than ever Sainville's. I devote myſelf entirely to him. To accompany him, to talk of you, to remind him of your advice and requeſts, theſe will now be the only duties I acknowledge. Be aſſured I will fulfil them to the utmoſt extent."—"I am content," ſaid ſhe; "ah! my friend, though you deplore my loſs, thank Heaven for my death. 'Tis impoſſible it ſhould be eaſier or ſweeter.—Providence has taken pity on the cruel agitations of this diſtracted heart, too much alive to ſenſibility, and too imprudent not to err, yet too virtuous to forgive its own weakneſs.—To yield to our paſſions, and rely too implicitly on our own virtue, theſe are the rocks that

are moſt dangerous to our permanent happineſs. If I ought to ſhudder at my paſt errors, in what light could I view my future lot? for were I ſtill to live, Great God, with what fatal events was it pregnant! the total loſs of that virtue on which love, gratitude, and pity, were about to [illegible]mple; in ſhort, all the miſery, all the [illegible]ment that the moſt blameworthy errors and the ſevereſt remorſe could produce. Death, death alone could liberate me from this horrid deſtiny. It preſerves my innocence and the eſteem of him I love. Yes," continued ſhe, claſping her hands, and raiſing them to heaven, "yes, full of peaceful contentment and the warmeſt gratitude, I ſhall fall aſleep with confidence in the boſom of a merciful God. He has forgiven my weakneſſes. I feel he has by the delicious calm he ſpreads through my ſoul."—"Great God," cried the baron, "theſe ſentiments are worthy of you. My

My voice ſhall unite with that of Conſtance —with that of an angel. Oh! deign to preſerve till her laſt moment the ſtrength and ſenſibility of that elevated ſoul which ſhe employs to honour and adore thy goodneſs. May her reſignation be an example and a model to edify and improv[illegible] her unfortunate friends; and may [illegible] teach them all the force of that vi[illegible] which thou guideſt." As he utte[illegible] this, word was brought that Sainville was riſing. It was then five o'clock. Conſtance felt uneaſy, and aſked for ſomething to drink, when a few drops of ether were given her. She ſeemed to reflect for a moment, then deſired the phyſician to go and prepare Sainville. He went immediately to diſcharge this ſad commiſſion. In a ſhort time the door opened, and Sainville, pale and trembling, entered with diſordered air, and ſcarcely able to ſupport himſelf; he advanced

vanced to the bed-ſide, fell on his knees, and unable to ſhed a tear, caſt a wildly gazing look at Conſtance.—She then drew out the packet which contained her will, and preſenting it to him, " Receive," ſaid ſhe with a feeble voice, " this laſt efficacy of the tendereſt affection, and ſwear to me, by our mutual paſſion and misfortunes, faithfully to execute all I have requeſted." Sainville ſtill fixed his eyes upon her with a dreadful wildneſs, without hearing what ſhe ſaid, without taking the packet, and without uttering a ſingle word. Conſtance almoſt ſwooned, and her head ſank upon the pillow. After a ſhort interval of ſilence, ſhe raiſed herſelf. " Sainville," ſaid ſhe, " would you ſee me die overwhelmed with deſpair ?"—" Oh ! what can I ſay to you," cried he.—" Take the oath I requeſt—for time is precious—and the Deity calls me away—he is about to interrogate me—he will hold me anſwerable for your life—promiſe me to pre-

ſerve

ſerve it." On hearing theſe words, a deep and mournful groan was at firſt the only anſwer of the wretched Sainville; but ſoon he ſaid in a half-ſtifled voice—"Yes—I promiſe."—"Then take this paper," ſaid lady Clarendon; you wil there find the laſt wiſhes of the moſt t der friend. When your read it, ſhe w longer exiſt; yet, ſtill you may pe her to guide your ſteps; you may prove, obeying her, how dear ſhe was to your heart, and live to honor her memory.—Oh! God," continued ſhe with energy, "behold this unfortunate man with a look of compaſſion—deign to enlighten his tortured ſoul, ſo worthy of knowing and raiſing itſelf to thee—may this dangerous ſympathy, which has miſled us both, conſole him in theſe moments of trial—breathe into his heart all the ſentiments that once animated mine—may the ſacred enthuſiaſm of virtue, there moderate the intoxication of the paſſions!" She pronounced theſe words

with

with a fervor that seemed even to reanimate her frame. Never did ſhe appear ſo lovely or ſo affecting. The dignity of her manner, the heavenly expreſſion of her countenance, and the tender tones of her harmonious voice, gave both to her figure and language ſomething ſupernatural and [illegible].—She pauſed,—then took the curtain [illegible] and let it gently fall between her and [illegible]nville; and thus hiding herſelf from his view, "Adieu!" ſaid ſhe, "Adieu! —let this veil, that now ſeparates us, be raiſed no more." Having thus ſpoken ſhe turned round, and received from the venerable prieſt the croſs he offered her. She took it within her folded arms, cloſed her eyes, and ſpoke no more.

Sainville, who was in a ſtate of anguiſh and ſtupor, that robbed him of every faculty but that of ſuffering, continued on his knees immoveable and ſilent. The baron was behind him, ſupporting him in his arms, without being perceived by his friend.

friend. A few minutes after, lady Clarendon made a ſlight motion, and the clergyman called the phyſician, who, advancing, came within the curtain, and almoſt immediately turning towards the baron, "Let us invoke heaven for her ſoul," ſaid he, "for it has this moment taken its flight to ſeek the boſom of [illegible] Creator." — "Oh! heaven," cried [illegible] baron in an agony, "then all is over— [illegible] is no more." At theſe words, Sainv[illegible] ſtarted; a horrid convulſion agitated his whole frame, and he was carried out of the room, ſtruggling to remain, till he fell ſenſeleſs into the arms of his friend.

THE END.

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